# IDEAS OF GOD IN ISRAEL

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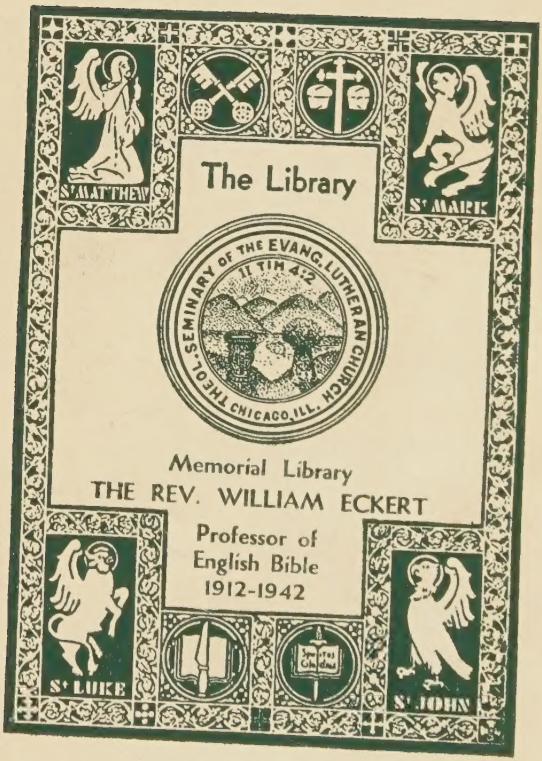
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# IDEAS OF GOD IN ISRAEL

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# IDEAS OF GOD IN ISRAEL

## THEIR CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT

BY

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# PREFACE

THE following pages do not attempt to give a comprehensive account of religion in Israel, but rather to isolate for study that element in religion which is of primary importance, namely belief in a God whose nature and character are known to his worshippers. This belief, as it takes form and shape in the mind of the worshippers, is their idea of God.

In Israel, as indeed in all nations, there was not a single uniform type of belief, nor was there one and only one idea of God. As there is more than one cultural level in any given nation, so there is more than one religious level, though the lines of demarcation in the two spheres do not necessarily coincide. What is commonly called the religion of Israel is in fact the religion of a spiritual aristocracy which was often in sharp opposition to the majority of the people.

It is maintained in what follows that throughout the history of Israel different types of religious belief, resulting in different ideas of God, existed side by side within the nation. Attention is directed to the lower as well as to the higher types. The literature of Israel has been handed down to us by those who stood on the higher spiritual levels, but, nevertheless, it contains many traces of the beliefs and practices of those who did not attain to those levels.

It is of much importance for a sincere and candid interpretation of the Old Testament and the rest of the literature that these traces should be frankly recognized for what they are, and that we should not try by forced and unnatural methods to incorporate them into the religion of the prophets and sages. If, on the contrary,

we can distinguish and hold apart the higher and lower types of belief, and approach with sympathy the latter as well as the former, we may learn from both not only something concerning the mind of man in its gradual development towards a more perfect understanding, but also something concerning the God who reveals himself by divers portions and by divers manners, according as men are prepared to apprehend him. If we try to follow this human development and divine self-revelation historically, we shall learn the more.

It is hoped, therefore, that this book may be helpful to the reader in that it attempts to present in their historical setting both the higher and the lower types of the idea of God, and to set them in a clearer perspective by limiting the study of religion in Israel to this one part of the subject.

Some of the inferences drawn in Part A of this book from facts recorded in the Old Testament may seem at first sight to be precarious. It may be freely admitted that such would be the case, if these facts stood alone. But they do not. Parallels may be found in other literatures and among other peoples, and when it is seen that the same inferences may be drawn in many similar instances, the probability that these inferences are true is greatly increased. Some of these parallels have been mentioned in the text, but since then my colleague, Bertram Colgrave, M.A., Lecturer in English in the University of Durham, has brought to my notice numerous examples from Northern Europe. A summary account of the worship of sacred groves and springs among the Teutonic tribes is to be found in the article on "Germanic Heathenism," by Miss Phillpotts, in the *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. ii, p. 489, and reference may also be made to the article on "Teutonic Religion" in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. xii. Sacred stones in the British Isles and elsewhere are well described by T. Eric Peet in *Rough Stone Monuments*.

My thanks are due to Mr. Colgrave, not only for supplying this information, but also for reading the proof sheets of this book; to Dr. W. O. E. Oesterley for advice and

criticism with regard to its arrangement for the press; and to my wife for her help in compiling the index.

I owe more than I can say to Canon J. T. Fowler, M.A., D.C.L., F.S.A., Hebrew Lecturer in this University for forty-seven years (1870–1917). He was my earliest teacher of Hebrew, and the first to turn my thoughts to Old Testament studies. *Senem adulescens ita dilexi, ut aequalem.* For more than twenty years we have shared the same enthusiasms, though we have not always held the same opinions. He has read with affectionate interest the whole of this book in proof, and his many illuminating comments would have enriched it, had space allowed their inclusion.

HATFIELD COLLEGE, DURHAM,
*November* 1923.

# CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE . . . . . 5

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS . . . . . 13

## INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS

### CHAPTER I

DEFINITION OF THE SUBJECT: AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE VARIOUS IDEAS, OR CONCEPTIONS, OF GOD IN ISRAEL . 15

Method of this study: certain types of ideas to be traced backward from the time of our Lord.

### CHAPTER II

IDEAS OF GOD IN ISRAEL IN OUR LORD'S TIME DESCRIBED . 21

(A) Primitive Ideas surviving in the Popular Religion.
(B) Prophetic Ideas fulfilled in the Teaching of our Lord.
(C) Legalistic Ideas prevailing in the Teaching of the Pharisees.

## *PART A*

## PRIMITIVE IDEAS OF GOD IN THE POPULAR RELIGION—A RETROSPECT

### CHAPTER I

EXAMPLES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT OF WORSHIP AT SACRED PLACES, STONES, TREES, AND WATERS . . . . . 43

MAṢṢEBOTH AND 'ASHERIM.

### CHAPTER II

WORSHIP OF ANIMALS—TOTEMISM—ANIMISM . . . . . 58

ANIMISM AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE DEAD.

WORSHIP OF ANCESTORS.

### CHAPTER III

WORSHIP OF THE HEAVENLY BODIES (ASTRAL WORSHIP) . . 78

CHAPTER IV

PAGE

THE METHOD OF WORSHIP—SACRIFICE . . . . . 83

CHAPTER V

PRIMITIVE IDEAS OF GOD ILLUSTRATED BY HEBREW PROPER NAMES . . . . . 92

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND INFERENCES FROM THE FOREGOING FACTS . 97

*PART B*

## PROPHETIC IDEAS OF GOD: THEIR CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER I

THE CONTENT OF THE PROPHETIC IDEAS . . . . . 105

Their fully developed form in DEUTERO-ISAIAH—the nearest approach to the mind of Christ.
Monotheism of DEUTERO-ISAIAH.
Universalism of the "Servant Songs."
Comparison of the teaching of DEUTERO-ISAIAH with that of JESUS.

CHAPTER II

THE CONTENT OF THE PROPHETIC IDEAS (*continued*) . . 117

The developed form modified in detail:
(*a*) In the Post-Exilic Prophets;
(*b*) In the Priestly Code;
(*c*) In the Psalter;
(*d*) In the Wisdom Literature;
(*e*) In the Apocalyptic Writings.

CHAPTER III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPHETIC IDEAS TRACED BACKWARD FROM DEUTERO-ISAIAH THROUGH EZEKIEL, JEREMIAH, AND DEUTERONOMY . . . . . 148

CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPHETIC IDEAS TRACED BACKWARD THROUGH ISAIAH, MICAH, HOSEA, AND AMOS . . 172

CHAPTER V

PAGE

THE "PRE-PROPHETIC" PERIOD . . . . . 193

J and E documents—The "Pre-Prophetic" Historians: their work in the early narratives of KINGS, SAMUEL, and JUDGES.

CHAPTER VI

THE "PRE-PROPHETIC" PERIOD (*continued*) . . . . 209

Invasion of Phœnician Ba'alism in the ninth century B.C., and the Reaction of Yahwism.
Elijah—the Jealousy and Righteousness of Yahwe.
Rechabites and Nazirites—the old nomadic religion.

CHAPTER VII

MOSES AND THE PROCLAMATION OF YAHWE AS THE GOD OF ISRAEL . . . . . 217

The Kenite Hypothesis.
The Covenant: its actual and potential significance.
The Relation between Yahwe and Israel—The Relation an ethical one from the beginning.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT FROM THE EXODUS ONWARD . . . . . 227

*PART C*

## LEGALISTIC IDEAS OF GOD

CHAPTER I

THE CONTENT OF THE IDEA OF GOD IN LEGALISM . . . 233

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGALISM TRACED BACKWARD THROUGH THE PRIESTLY CODE, EZEKIEL, THE HOLINESS CODE, AND DEUTERONOMY.

CHAPTER II

LEGALISM AND THE MODIFICATION OF THE PROPHETIC IDEAS 243

The Inconsistencies of Legalism—The Value of Legalism.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER

FINAL SUMMARY . . . . . 252

Evolution and Revelation.

INDEX . . . . . 255

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

*ad loc.*—at the place referred to.
*al.—et aliter*, and elsewhere.
A.V.—Authorized Version.
b—(e.g. in *Matthew* xxiii, 23b), the second part of the verse.
*B.D.B.—A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by F. Brown, with the co-operation of S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs, Oxford, 1892, and following years.
D—Author of *Deuteronomy*; also used of Deuteronomic passages.
*D.C.G.—Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, edited by J. Hastings, 1906.
E—Old Hebrew historical document incorporated in the Hexateuch.
*E.Bi.—Encyclopædia Biblica*, edited by T. K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black, London, 1899.
ed. 1, 2, etc.—first, or second, etc., edition of a work.
*E.R.E.—The Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by J. Hastings, Edinburgh, 1909, and following years.
E.T.—English translation of a foreign work.
f. and ff.—following verse (page) or verses (pages).
Gesenius-Kautzsch—Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar as edited and enlarged by E. Kautzsch; translated by G. W. Collins, Oxford, 1898.
*G.V.I.—Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, by B. Stade, 1881–8.
H—"The Law of Holiness" (*Leviticus*, chaps. xvii–xxvi).
*H.D.B.—A Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by J. Hastings, Edinburgh, 1898 and following years.
Heb.—Hebrew.
Hexateuch—Pentateuch with *Joshua*.
*ibid.*—in the same place, on the same page.
*I.C.C.—International Critical Commentary*, by various authors; genera editors, S. R. Driver, A. Plummer, and C. A. Briggs.
J—Old Hebrew historical document incorporated in Hexateuch.
JE—The "Prophetical" narrative of the Hexateuch, composed of J and E.
*J.Ph.—Journal of Philology*.
*J.T.S.—Journal of Theological Studies*.
*loc. cit.*—in the place quoted or referred to.
*L.O.T.—An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, by S. R. Driver, 9th edition.
LXX—The Septuagint Greek Version of the Old Testament.
M.T.—The Massoretic Pointed Hebrew Text of the Old Testament.
*op. cit.*—in the work quoted or referred to.
P—The "Priestly" document in the Hexateuch.
R.V.—Revised Version.
*S.B.O.T.—The Sacred Books of the Old Testament in Hebrew*, general editor, P. Haupt, 1893 and following years.
Syrr.—Syriac Versions of the Bible.
Vg.—Vulgate Latin Version of the Old Testament.
*Z.V.P.—Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie*.

# INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS

## CHAPTER I

## DEFINITION OF THE SUBJECT: AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE VARIOUS IDEAS, OR CONCEPTIONS, OF GOD IN ISRAEL

METHOD OF THIS STUDY: CERTAIN TYPES OF IDEAS TO BE DESCRIBED AND TRACED BACKWARD FROM THE TIME OF OUR LORD.

MANY books have been written on the subject of Old Testament theology, and many attempts made in them to define the Old Testament idea of God.

The task that scholars have set themselves is difficult, but perhaps not impossible, for the books of the Canon, though they originated in different ages and from authors differing widely in temperament and outlook, have all passed through the hands of editors belonging to the school which became dominant in the last pre-Christian centuries. Consequently they all bear the impress of their thought.

From this it follows that, if we have regard mainly to what appears in the foreground of the Scriptures, we can discover certain broad outlines which define with a clearness generally sufficient the conception of God prevailing in the Old Testament as a whole.

Closer observation, however, and attention to what lies, perhaps, more in the background, soon disclose the fact that much remains which cannot easily be fitted into the outline supposed thus to be drawn. It becomes evident, for example, that the writers to whom we owe the formulation of the elaborate rules for the approach of man to God held views of the divine nature widely different from those of the naïve narrator who told the story of the garden where Yahwe walked with Adam in the cool of the day, or of the nomad's tent by the terebinths

of Mamre, where Abraham entertained his divine visitant with the customary hospitality of a Bedouin sheikh. Again, the prophet who declared that Yahwe would avenge the blood shed at Jezreel had not the same conception of his God as the historian who looked on Jehu's massacres as an eminent example of zeal for Yahwe, inspired by the great prophet of the earlier day.

Thus, unless we approach the Old Testament with a preconceived notion of what it must or should contain, we shall "recognize in the monuments of Hebrew faith, as they have been preserved to us, varying degrees of inspiration, different strata of tradition, and the likeness of a literature rather than a book." [1]

Editorial revision has not reduced the doctrines of that literature to one uniform level of consistency, though we have in the main the teachings of the school that ultimately prevailed. We know less of the views of other teachers, for these are referred to incidentally only, and chiefly by way of reprobation. Yet even in this way enough has been preserved to prove that at no time during the period covered by the Old Testament did there exist only one conception of God. Neither was there uniformity in the years that followed. On the contrary, we catch sight of many ideas of God, existing side by side or in successive ages, expounded by leaders of thought or cherished as part of their traditional heritage by larger or smaller numbers of the people of Israel.[2]

It seems correct, therefore, to speak of "ideas of God in Israel" rather than "*the* idea of God," and an attempt will be made to describe and trace some of them.

But when we begin to make this attempt, we may be confused by the multiplicity of the ideas which emerge, as we study with this end in view the literature within and without the Canon.

Can we, however, discover any order among them? Can we see how they are related one to another? Can we

[1] C. H. W. Johns, in *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, 1909, p. 23.
[2] Cf. Gunkel: "Gottesbegriff in A.T.," in *Religion in Geschichte u. Gegenwart.*

trace through them a development of thought among the Israelite people ?

The remembrance of what has been accomplished in other fields by the critical historian will dispose us to answer yes to all these questions. The student of art, of literature, of philosophy finds in any nation he may select much diversity of aim and achievement, and yet amid the diversity he traces certain definite tendencies, and distinguishes a comparatively small number of "schools" of thought. It may be possible to do the same in the field of Israel's religion : to discern, that is, a few broad types of doctrine and belief, under which may be classified the various conceptions of God appearing in the Old Testament and the later literature of Judaism.

We may expect to distinguish these types, or at least some of them, most clearly at an epoch when they are nearest to our view. That epoch is, for the Christian student, the ministry of Jesus. For the Gospels disclose to us not only what he taught about the nature and character of God, but also in some measure what was believed and taught by his contemporaries. Our knowledge is enlarged by what we learn from Josephus and other sources, so that it is possible to obtain a tolerably complete view of the chief kinds of religious teaching in our Lord's day.

Soon after that day church and state were shattered by the Jewish War, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the final ruin brought about by the Bar Cochba revolt. While Israel's land passed into the possession of strangers, much that was most precious in its spiritual heritage found henceforth its best guardians in the Christian church. Israel itself, severed from Palestine, and confronted by the rivalry of an expanding Christianity, entered on a new stage of religious development with a new centre at Babylon. This stage will lie beyond our present inquiry, which will move between the limits set by the ministry of Jesus at the one end and that of Moses at the other.

Throughout this period the national life went on, amid many vicissitudes, but without any breach of continuity such as was caused by the disasters of A.D. 70

and their culmination in A.D. 135; for, after the fall of the Davidic kingdom in 586 B.C., the exiles in Babylon still kept touch with their brethren in Judæa, and the community of the Restoration gave effect to the ideals of the reformers of Josiah's reign.

Within these limits, then, we may hope to trace development in the types of religious belief met with in the literature. We shall begin with the ideas of God at the nearer limit, when Jesus was teaching in Galilee, and we shall include in our review his doctrine, the last and noblest offered to Israel while it remained a nation in its own land.

After briefly sketching these ideas we shall endeavour to trace back their antecedents through the Apocryphal and Apocalyptic literature of the Jews and the documents of the Old Testament to the beginnings of the history of Israel.

The method to be adopted is an unusual one. It has, no doubt, its difficulties and dangers; but it may have the advantage that we shall be proceeding from the relatively clear to the more obscure, and shall be safeguarded to some extent from imposing our own arbitrary interpretation upon the facts that are dimly discerned in the oldest sources of our knowledge.

A fresh method of arrangement may also show in new aspects facts that are already familiar to the reader.

We might have begun, as is more usual in historical studies, by searching out the most primitive thoughts of God retained in the Old Testament documents, and have traced their history onward through successive periods. We might have watched their growth through accretion or interaction until a more or less complete unity was reached, which might be called the Old Testament, or the Hebrew, idea of God. The apparent advantages of this method are obvious: we begin at the beginning, and we proceed step by step towards the end; we begin by taking the simplest elements, and combine them to form the whole.

It is questionable, however, whether the material at our disposal admits of a satisfactory application of this

method. In the Old Testament, even if we undo the work of the editors, and arrange its contents in the chronological order of their composition, we are not dealing with the linear evolution of one idea, a continuous progress towards a single end. The evolution is not simply continuous, but (using terms made familiar by Dr. Jevons) radiative, dispersive.[1]

The facts are expressed by Wernle thus: "The books of the Bible contain such a multitude of external and internal contradictions that they must not be understood as the record of a revelation of God, but as documents of a very long historical religious process, a process full of contradictions, in which distinctly separate religions contend with one another."[2]

Without necessarily admitting Wernle's negation in the form in which he states it, we may accept his positive statement: the books of the Old Testament are the record of a conflict of ideas, or, as Jevons prefers to put it, of conflicting interpretations of the idea of God.

The "separate religions," or rather the diverse forms of the idea of God, having been viewed at a point where some of them at least emerge into clear light at the close of the life of Israel as a nation on its own soil, we shall have to survey the earlier stages of the conflict. Or, taking Dr. Jevons's metaphor, we shall have to go back along the several lines upon which dispersive evolution has proceeded. In this dispersive evolution the lines are of different length, representing the relative possibility of development in different directions.

We may find a case in which the line is cut short, end-stopped, because there was no further possibility of development in that direction. Progress could be made only by harking back and starting out afresh upon a different line. Such a case of arrested evolution we shall, in fact, find in the primitive nature-religion, which existed in Israel, as in other Semitic peoples.

In other cases the lines may be continuous, that is to say, the evolution of ideas in their direction has been

[1] Cf. Jevons: *The Idea of God in Early Religions*, pp. 152 ff.
[2] *Einführung in das theologische Studium*, ed. 2, p. 66.

progressive up to the epoch we have chosen for our first survey.

Our task, then, is to describe the content of the ideas of God as they existed in our Lord's day, and then to trace them backward, observing, where possible, their evolution from the early forms.

It is impossible to draw a hard and fast line between the idea of God and the rest of the religious conceptions of Israel. Religion is a whole, and its parts interpenetrate. The thought of the student passes readily from the conception of God over the whole field of theology. But so far as is possible the following discussion has been restricted to the nature and character of God himself. It might be held that the Messianic expectation fell within the limits of the subject proposed, inasmuch as the Messiah was regarded as the representative and vice-gerent of Yahwe; but since the divinity of the Messiah is not directly taught before the time of Jesus, it has seemed justifiable to exclude any treatment of this expectation. In any case, to deal with it adequately would involve too great a lengthening of the discussion.

The critical standpoint adopted is generally that of Driver in his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, and of the writers in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*; but in certain cases where the genuineness of passages accepted by these authorities is questioned by an important body of opinion, it has seemed best not to base any reasoning upon them, in order to avoid raising critical problems which could be decided, if at all, only by a long and intricate argument.

## CHAPTER II

# IDEAS OF GOD IN ISRAEL IN OUR LORD'S TIME DESCRIBED

A. Primitive Ideas Surviving in Popular Religion.
B. Prophetic Ideas Fulfilled in the Teaching of Our Lord.
C. Legalistic Ideas Prevailing in the Teaching of the Pharisees.

### A. Primitive Ideas surviving in Popular Religion.

Our knowledge of the religious life and thought of Israel in the time of our Lord is derived mainly from the Gospels. By their aid we see a community in which religious teachers were many, and were highly honoured. We see Jesus as a boy sitting among the "doctors of the Law" at Jerusalem; we find him as a man disputing with the scribes in the synagogues of Galilee; we see him in the last week questioned concerning his doctrine by the Sadducees and the Pharisees, with the political Herodians in the background.

From Josephus we learn something about other sects, such as the Zealots and the Essenes.

The Gospels and Josephus give us, however, but few glimpses into the mind of the common people apart from their teachers. What were their thoughts about God?

Among the Jews religious education was general and organized to an extent unknown elsewhere in antiquity, and the Pharisees of the first century A.D. were not wanting in zealous efforts to make converts to their doctrines. Yet to Jesus on one occasion the people appeared as "sheep having no shepherd,"[1] and we may feel sure that his compassion for them was stirred, not only by their physical needs, but also by their lack of spiritual enlightenment.

[1] Matt. ix. 36.

There must have been many, indeed, especially in the remoter parts of the land, whom the influence of accredited teachers did not reach effectually. The Pharisees themselves, in a moment of petulance, bear witness to the existence of a "multitude that knoweth not the law." [1] This multitude was the "people of the land" (*'am hā-'āreç*) [2] in the Pharisaic phrase.

Their deficiency in many cases, no doubt, consisted in non-observance of the ceremonial law, whether through ignorance or indifference; but in other cases it must have been more serious, and have amounted to a more or less complete failure to apprehend that high doctrine of God, as one and unique and spiritual, which prevailed among all educated Jews of the time.

Naturally these ignorant folk have left no written record of their beliefs, and only rare incidental references to them are to be found in contemporary literature.

But the record of their faith has not perished, for it has been handed down by tradition from generation to generation of those who have occupied successively the soil of Canaan. "Semitic speech and Semitic territory conjoined, even if we could prove that radical changes have been made in the population, have been found more powerful for sustaining ancient customs than alien blood in obliterating them." [3]

Hence the trained observer can discover among the peasants of modern Syria clear traces of beliefs which must have existed among the "people of the land" in the time of Christ and for many centuries before his day. S. I. Curtiss,[4] C. T. Wilson,[5] and F. J. Bliss [6] have conducted inquiries in Palestine, and Jaussen [7] in the border country of Moab, and their results prove that the primitive customs described by Robertson Smith in the *Religion of the Semites*, and by Wellhausen in *Reste Arabischen Heidentums*, exist on, and around, the soil of Palestine to-day.

[1] John vii. 49. [2] עַם־הָאָרֶץ.
[3] S. I. Curtiss: *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, p. 58.
[4] *Op. cit.* [5] *Peasant Life in Palestine.*
[6] *Religions of Palestine.*
[7] *Coutumes des Arabes au Pays de Moab.*

The ignorant peasants of these regions may profess the religion of Christ or Mohammed, and render lip-service to the idea of monotheism, but the worship of spirits and ancestors is more of a power in their lives. Therefore, since those religious institutions which the Arab writers quoted by Robertson Smith and Wellhausen refer back to the time before Mohammed, survive in the same regions to-day, we are justified in concluding that they have been transmitted by an unbroken tradition, and that what is found to-day among the peasants of Palestine might have been found among the "people of the land" in the days of Jesus. We may assume that their ideas of God corresponded generally to the conceptions that still linger on.

We shall, therefore, now proceed to describe these still extant survivals of primitive beliefs, as affording us a glimpse of the mind of those "sheep not having a shepherd," the ignorant folk of our Lord's day, whom the higher teaching had failed to detach from the traditions handed down from time immemorial.

The modern Syrian peasant believes theoretically, it may be, in one God, but practically he believes a great deal more firmly in a local divinity connected with a neighbouring shrine.

Innumerable shrines exist throughout Syria and the neighbouring districts. Curtiss counted more than fifty in a journey from Beinu to Safita (North Syria), a distance of about thirty miles. In theory every shrine pre-supposes a *weli*, or saint, who may appear in bodily form to his devotees. One of the most famous shrines is that of Aaron on Mount Hor. Curtiss [1] records concerning it a dialogue with an Arab guide at Petra, in which it appears that Aaron is thought of as coming to his shrine on two days of the week. Again, at the alleged birthplace of Abraham, near Damascus, is a shrine, on the wall of which a notice is posted: "Advice to those who visit this place, where is Abraham, father of Isaac, the sacrificed, the grandfather of the prophets! Come, tell him all your adversities and hardships, and he will help you." [2] It will be observed

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 79. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 81.

that nothing is said of the saint's intercession : he is the source, not merely the channel of help.

Theoretically, at this, as at the other shrines, worship is offered to the God of all the earth ; but practically the object of the worship is the patriarch, saint, or *weli*, and the people know no other God. To him they offer supplications and thanksgiving, as did their ancestors to the Ba'alim of old. They fear to break oaths made at the shrine, or to use obscene language when approaching it, though often no such reverence is paid by them to the supreme God of their nominal faith.[1]

The self-revelation of the saints takes place in connexion with sacred stones, wells, fountains, and trees. Curtiss relates that a devout Moslem told him : " No one knows where the saints really are, but they know where they have appeared. There is a saint who appears near my house ; his name is Abu Zed. At Asal there is a stone, into which my patron saint entered." [2]

At Callirrhoe (Zerka Main) there are hot springs which are regarded as being under the control of a saint (*weli*) or spirit (*jinn*), who makes the fire and keeps it burning.[3] The natives, who go to be healed of their rheumatism, invoke the spirit, beseeching him to keep up the fire, and in order to persuade him they offer sacrifices.[4]

The sacred trees are very numerous. Curtiss [5] quotes a missionary of long experience thus : " A tree at Gaza el-Maisi is distinctly held to be indwelt by a divine spirit, and accordingly receives divine honours. Where a tree is connected with a *weli* it was probably the original object of honour."

Near Mount Carmel is an artificial cave, said to have been dwelt in by Elijah, and called by the Moslems *Khuddr*. The guardian of this cave, speaking thankfully of the income he received through his service of the *weli*, said to Curtiss : " *Khuddr* is my god, and my father's god ; he has supported us for years." [6] Here we have an explicit expression of the belief which is held implicitly by many of the modern Syrians.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 75. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 85. [3] Cf. John v. 4 (A.V.).
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 89. [5] *Op. cit.*, p. 91. [6] *Op. cit.*, p. 95.

Only one of many examples in each case of the veneration of trees, waters, and stones, given by Curtiss, has been mentioned here. Similar examples may be found in the works of Jaussen, Bliss, and Wilson. Reference may also be made to Tristram's *Land of Israel* (4th ed.), p. 614; Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*, i. p. 450; and Thompson's *The Land and the Book*, pp. 169–171.

The following quotation (abbreviated) from C. R. Conder's *Tent Work in Palestine*, pp. 304 ff., is of interest as illustrating a number of the points already referred to :—

"The professed religion of the country is Islam, yet you may live for months in the out-of-the-way parts of Palestine without seeing a mosque, or hearing the call of a Muedhen to prayer. Still, the people are not without a religion which shapes every action of their daily life. In almost every village in the country a small building surmounted by a white-washed dome is observable. On the top of a peak, or on the back of a ridge, the little white dome gleams brightly in the sun; under the boughs of the spreading oak or terebinth; beside the solitary palm, or among the aged lotus trees at a spring one lights constantly on the low building, standing isolated, or surrounded by the shallow graves of a small cemetery. The trees beside these *Mukams* are always considered sacred, and every bough which falls is treasured within the sacred building. The *Mukam* represents the real religion of the peasant. It is sacred as the place where some saint is supposed once to have 'stood' (the name signifying 'standing-place'), or else is consecrated by some other connexion with his memory. It is the central point from which the influence of the saint is supposed to radiate, extending in the case of a powerful sheikh to a distance of perhaps twenty miles all round. A peasant will rather confess a murder than forswear himself on the shrine of a reputed sheikh, with the supposed certainty of being killed by supernatural agencies."

That we have here no mere corruption of a higher faith, but rather the survival of a primitive religion, may be proved by the fact that precisely similar instances of the veneration of trees, waters, and stones as divine, or as the

habitations of divine beings, are given by Robertson Smith [1] and Wellhausen [2] in their sketches of Semitic religion before the preaching of Mohammed.

This localizing of the divine presence may be taken, therefore, as a constant element in the popular religion in Semitic lands. No doubt there is, and has been from time immemorial, a general belief in the Supreme Being, the Author of all and Ruler of all,[3] but this belief is not an effective force in men's lives. To quote again a competent witness cited by Curtiss : " The idea of God is very vague, but seems to be mainly an enlarged edition of a Bedouin sheikh ; that is, of a beneficent but capricious despot. I have never met with anyone who had a notion of the character of God." [4]

Many of the people, we are told, think of God as having a complete human organism,[5] and inasmuch as they make little distinction between God and the *weli*, the departed spirit, or the *jinn*, and it is the *weli* who is the only deity with practical influence upon their lives, we must conclude that the idea of the physical fatherhood of deity still exists, when we find it frequently held that a disembodied spirit, whether that of an ordinary man or a *weli*, can become a physical father.[6]

Extreme anthropomorphism prevails also in the conception of God's moral qualities. He is the author of both good and evil, as is every earthly ruler of whom the peasant has experience, and he may lead men astray. He is a jealous being, whose favour must be sought by presents, and it is " singularly impertinent to go before him empty-handed." Sin and misfortune are so closely connected as to be practically identified. " The Bedouin and ignorant Syrian has every reason to believe that his relations with the being he regards as most powerful are good till misfortune comes ; in his misfortune is the evidence of his sin, and he seeks at once to put himself

[1] *Religion of the Semites*, ed. 2, Lect. V.
[2] *Reste des arab. Heid.*, ed. 2, pp. 102–106.
[3] Cf. Lagrange : *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*, chap. v.
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 67.
[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 72, text and footnote.
[6] *Op. cit.*, pp. 113–19. Cf. Baldersperger, *Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement*, 1899, pp. 48 f.

on good terms with the being he has offended, by some gift." [1] The Gospels afford evidence of the existence of this belief in the time of Jesus, who himself emphatically rejects it.[2] Sin, being in this way identified with misfortune, lacks ethical character, and consequently the conception of God is much like that of an earthly ruler who makes right and wrong by edict, and whose anger must be averted and favour won by gifts and tribute.

> Curtiss gives some evidence of the worship of the sun and moon, and states as his opinion that there can be no question but that the ignorant among the Nusairiyeh—a sect in the Lebanon—worship the heavenly bodies. These people worship also the deified Ali, cousin and son-in-law of Mohammed. "They hold that God is in the sun and moon. God is called Ali, the highest. They are divided into two sects: some believe that he is in the sun, others that he is in the moon." The ruins of many ancient sun-temples remain, but Curtiss does not mention any instance of the continuance of the old worship at them.[3]

The modern Semite feels himself as dependent on the favour of the *welis* as the ancient Semite did upon the *Ba'alim* for good harvests. The motive for vows, gifts, and sacrifices is the same in both cases. Sacrifices are still offered to the *welis* at the shrines, quite in the ancient manner. The sacrificial blood is applied to the doorposts of houses or the cords of tents, as well as to the shrines themselves. Instances are given by Curtiss.[4] Doughty [5] also relates how the Arab husbandmen will "sprinkle new break-land with the blood of a peace-offering."

Connected with the sacrifices there may be a meal, and the sheep, bullock, or goat may be eaten with festive hilarity. But according to Curtiss [6] it is very doubtful whether this feast should be described as a "sacrificial meal." He was unable to discover clear evidence that the divine being or the saint was regarded as present at the feast. The notion that he did find set forth with unanimity in all parts of the country and among all kinds of people was that the "shedding of blood" or the

[1] Curtiss, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
[2] John ix. 1–3; Luke xiii. 1–5.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 103 *n.*
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 180 ff.
[5] *Arabia Deserta*, vol. i, p. 136.
[6] *Op. cit.*, p. 222.

"bursting forth of blood" was the essential element in sacrifice. He concludes from this that the sacrifices have a substitutionary character, and that the divine (or demonic) powers are placated by the sign of a surrendered life.[1]

Present-day custom seems, therefore, to support the contention of Lagrange, that sacrifice is originally an offering made over to the deity by immolation, rather than a meal of which the god and his worshippers partook in common.

> Cf. Lagrange, *Études*, p. 274. "Toutes les différentes manifestations du sacrifice, jusqu'au sacrifice humain et à l'idée de la victime déléguée, découlent donc assez aisément de l'idée première d'offrande par l'immolation."
>
> But contrast Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 351 *et passim*, and Wellhausen, *Reste*, p. 124.

We have now had before us evidence of the survival in our own day of primitive ideas of God among the people of Syria and Palestine. From this evidence we venture to infer that similar ideas existed in the same region in our Lord's day, not, of course, in any official teaching, but in the mind of the ignorant among the people. While Jesus was proclaiming the good news of the heavenly Father, and the Pharisees were urging men to serve ever more scrupulously the Author of the Law, there were some at least of their fellow-countrymen who maintained the worship of divine powers at the time-honoured sanctuaries of the land, and who venerated the sacred trees and stones and waters. Their conception of God was ill-defined, and did not rise above the notion of a being who gave good gifts in return for the offerings of his servants, who was normally beneficent, but capricious in his favour, and whose moral character was, indeed, little higher than that of the average human ruler.

These primitive conceptions surviving in the popular religion are, then, one type of the ideas of God existing in Israel at the beginning of the Christian era. We shall trace these conceptions through the earlier centuries in Part A of the following discussion.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 227.

## B. Prophetic Ideas fulfilled in the Teaching of Our Lord.

"Your heavenly Father." In these words Jesus expressed the idea of God to the Israel of his day. These words, ever widening and ever deepening in their meaning, as social and religious experience widened and deepened, have remained to our day an adequate formula within which to include our thoughts about God, when we approach him in the path of religion.

The philosophical conception of deity has varied from age to age in the Christian centuries, but through them all the Christian has prayed "Our Father." The Israelite also has used the same words, as in the well-known hymn of R. Yehudah :—

> Our Father, from thy children's plea
> Turn not we implore thee.

What, then, is the content of the idea of God which Jesus expressed in this simple formula? We must seek for it, not in definition or analysis, for such are not found in the Gospels, but in his presentation of God's attitude to men, and of his dealings with men and his requirements from them.

When Jesus speaks of "your heavenly Father," he uses the most familiar of human relations to describe the nature and character of God. It is, therefore, to a knowable Being that men approach in prayer, not a Being so remote and transcendent that none but negative epithets can properly be applied to him. Fatherhood is an universal human relation, and no one is without some experience of its meaning. For all, then, God is knowable; and he may be known, truly, if only partially, through the medium of the human family.

To the Jew of our Lord's day fatherhood would connote certainly two facts, love and authority, and the Jew would have stressed the latter.

Jesus does not fail to give due emphasis to the authority of God, for he warns his friends whom they should fear. "Fear him," he says, "which after he hath killed, hath

authority to cast into Gehenna." [1] We, in our century, are apt to overlook this aspect of authority in the idea of fatherhood, and to feel that such a saying harmonizes ill with the tender words that follow it in the Gospel; [2] but no incongruity would be felt by the first hearers of Jesus. Bousset [3] may even be right when he declares that this saying must be taken as the background of our Lord's thought.

Authority is inherent in fatherhood, as it is portrayed in the scriptures of the Old Testament. "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father" [4] is one of the commandments of the Law. The sages of Israel went so far as to contemplate a fatherly punishment which might bring a son near to death.[5] "The family, according to ancient Israelite notions, was an absolute monarchy, with the father as absolute monarch at its head. Authority and obedience are its foundation-stones." [6]

But this absolute monarch of the Jewish family was no arbitrary despot, delighting in the exercise of power for its own sake. Rule and chastisement are always regarded as disciplinary, and the typical father in the Wisdom literature appeals to his son to obey him, because he has taught him in the way of wisdom.[7]

So in the teaching of Jesus the thought of the divine Fatherhood does not exclude that of the divine Kingship: the two are complementary. A number of parables present God as the King who rewards and punishes, acquits and condemns, according to righteousness.[8] For righteousness is an essential element in the divine character. His citizens are "they who hunger and thirst after righteousness," [9] and they are to be perfect in their righteousness as their heavenly Father-King is perfect.[10]

Men are, however, far from perfection; they are, indeed, unfit for the Kingdom of God, and hence the preaching of Jesus begins with the call: "Repent ye." [11] But no

[1] Luke xii. 5. [2] Luke xii. 6 f.
[3] *Jesus*, p. 111 (E.T.). [4] Lev. xix. 3.
[5] Prov. xxiii. 13 f. Cf. xiii. 24, xix. 18, xxii. 15, xxix. 15, 17.
[6] Cf. Cornill: *Culture of Ancient Israel*, p. 87.
[7] Prov. iv. 10 f; Sir. iii. 1–16.
[8] Matt. xviii. 23 ff., xxv. 14–30.
[9] Matt. v. 6. [10] Matt. v. 48. [11] Mark i. 15.

condition other than repentance and faith in the gracious message is imposed on those who would be citizens in the kingdom or sons in the divine family. When Jesus denies the right of entrance " except ye turn and become as little children," [1] he only expresses the abstract idea of repentance in a simpler and more concrete form. No price need be paid for the heavenly citizenship, and no tribute is exacted from the sons of the King.[2] Nowhere does Jesus bid his hearers offer the Temple sacrifices to win acceptance with God, and nowhere does he speak of God as requiring propitiation. On the contrary, the parable of the Prodigal Son, which tells of the father hurrying to meet the repentant sinner, while he is yet a great way off,[3] seems clearly to exclude the possibility that there is any barrier between God and his children other than that erected by their own perverse self-will.

> The references made by Jesus to his own death as a " ransom for many," [4] even if they occur in genuine sayings, by no means necessarily imply that his death is a propitiatory sacrifice, offered to avert the wrath of God.[5]

Thus, in the view of Jesus, God is a Father, possessing and exercising all the authority attributed to fatherhood in Jewish thought, righteous himself and demanding righteousness in all his children, chastening them when they transgress, but restoring them again to the full privileges of sonship on the sole condition of their repentance. His fatherly authority is royal in its dignity, but it has none of the features of an Oriental despotism, which can be approached only with gifts and flattery and servile deprecation of wrath.[6]

It has been necessary to insist on this character of authority in Jesus' idea of God, and on the fear which is the human response to it ; but love and tenderness are no less essential in the idea. Indeed, the very saying [7] that gives such forcible expression to the sterner aspect of

[1] Matt. xviii. 3.
[2] Matt. xvii. 26.
[3] Luke xv. 20.
[4] Cf. Mark x. 45, and parallels.
[5] Cf. Rashdall: *Lectures on the Atonement*, Lect. I, Note A.
[6] Cf. *Concerning Prayer*, ed. by B. H. Streeter, Essay III, by H. Anson.
[7] Luke xii. 5.

God's nature is followed by some of the tenderest words in the Gospels: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. Fear not; ye are of more value than many sparrows." [1]

The hearers of Jesus are encouraged to trust to the uttermost the unceasing care of the Father for his children He who has given life will surely provide food and raiment. Why, then, should his children be anxious about these things? Their heavenly Father knoweth that they have need of them.[2]

In this practical fashion is taught the omniscience of God. He who controls nature knows the details of men's daily needs, numbering the very hairs of their heads, seeing in secret the worshipper in the inner chamber, seeing the unnoticed deed of mercy, or the fasting that hides itself from the eyes of men.[3]

A God who thus knows all, and who hears every heartfelt prayer, though it be offered at no recognized sanctuary, is in a practical sense omnipresent. He is the Father "in the heavens," but his being there does not remove him from the world of everyday things. If the Fourth Gospel does not literally report, it accurately paraphrases, the teaching of Jesus, when it says: "God is Spirit." [4] The God of Jesus is as intimately near, and as all-pervading, as the wind that blows about us.

There is no polemic in the Gospels against idolatry. The unity of God, the doctrine which the faithful Jew held with a tenacity which was often fierce, is simply assumed by Jesus. It was unthinkable that there could be any other beside the heavenly Father.

Moreover, the unity of God is postulated by the universality of his care for men. He summons to his table the strangers from the highways and hedges; [5] he gives "unto this last" even as unto the first; [6] and when the nations are cited before the judgement throne, one standard is applied to all alike.[7]

As there is no God beside the heavenly Father, so, it

[1] Luke xii. 6 f. [2] Matt. vi. 19–34. [3] Matt. vi. 1–8.
[4] John iv. 24. [5] Matt. xxii. 9. [6] Matt. xx. 14.
[7] Matt. xxv. 31–46.

may be said, there is practically no intermediary between him and his children. The very idea of fatherhood seems to imply direct contact between God and man. Jesus does, indeed, speak of the angels, but they are mentioned rather as part of the symbolism of his parables than as beings with whom we have immediate concern.

This sense of nearness, or rather of direct contact between God and man, which is expressed positively by the name "Father," is implied negatively by the abandonment of most of the customary terms of address of Jewish piety, and particularly by the disuse of the epithet "holy" in the vocabulary of Jesus. Only once is this characteristic Old Testament word applied to God in the four Gospels.[1]

Although the name of God is derived from a human relationship, and the action of God illustrated from men's conduct within that relationship,[2] yet no one could fairly describe Jesus' doctrine of God as anthropomorphic. The heavenly Father is no glorified and magnified man. He is unique, and the likeness between God and man is felt to be one in which God is the original, and man the pale reflexion. Physical anthropomorphism we should never think of finding in the thought of Jesus; but ethical anthropomorphism is as far from it, for the God of Jesus is completely moralized, and it is only in his best elements that man is the image of God.

Again, anthropomorphism, in any unworthy sense, is excluded from the idea of God, if God is perfect love, as he is to the mind of Jesus.

Finally, the character of God is revealed in the requirements he makes of men. The heavenly Father asks for love alone, and only he who is perfect Love will or can make this his sole demand. When Jesus summed up the Law in the two commandments[3] which are ultimately one (for both call for love), he gave a revelation not only of human duty, but also of divine character. To teach that men should love God was nothing new, but to teach that love was all that men should, or could, give to God

[1] See Moffatt: *Theology of the Gospels*, chap. iii.
[2] Luke xi. 13.
[3] Mark xii. 29–31.

was to show originality in the truest sense, and to express a doctrine of God which was really new.

Sacrifice and offering have no place in the religion of Jesus ; [1] the Sabbath exists for man ; [2] all meats in themselves are clean [3] ; and nothing entering into a man from without can defile him or make him unacceptable with God.[4] The laboured fulfilment of a ceremonial law tends towards the neglect of the weightier matters of mercy and judgement and faith, towards blindness and hypocrisy.[5]

Jesus claimed, indeed, to fulfil the Law ; but this claim, in view of the spirit of his teaching, and in spite of *Matthew* v 17–20, and *Matthew* xxiii, 3 and 23b, cannot mean that he or his followers would fulfil it by a detailed observance. Rather, as he accepted the Old Testament as from God, so he assumed that its true meaning coincided with his own intuition of God's will.

Briefly, then, the idea of God as presented by Jesus is that of a spiritual Being who is a Father to mankind, who is, in a practical sense, all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present, who is unique, and is the same for all, without distinction of race or class. This Father is so near to his children that no intermediary is needed to establish communion between him and them. The heavenly Father possesses authority, which he exercises in discipline, but his authority is in the end the right of perfect Love to claim the response of love, which is the sole, yet all-including, duty owed to him by man, superseding the tribute of sacrifice and offering and the observance of a law contained in commandments and ordinances.

This idea, in its completeness and its simplicity, is in the truest sense original. Yet, as we hope to show in Part B of this discussion, it is the crown and fulfilment of all that is best in what was taught "by divers portions and in divers manners" by the prophets of Israel.

[1] Matt. ix. 13.
[2] Mark ii. 27.
[3] Mark vii. 19.
[4] Mark vii. 15.
[5] Matt. xxiii. *passim*.

## C. Legalistic Ideas prevailing in the Teaching of the Pharisees.

God's Fatherhood, as taught by Jesus, implies an immediate contact between God and man, and a likeness between human nature and the divine. Nay more, it suggests a certain continuity between the human and the divine. True, God is the "heavenly" Father; that is, he is transcendent, as we should say. But transcendence does not of necessity involve an absolute distinction of nature. "The eternal contrast between the actual and the ideal seems to furnish the natural key to the problem of immanence and transcendence. Transcendence does not mean remoteness or aloofness. The distinction it points to is that between the perfect and the imperfect; and by perfection we do not understand the possession of innumerable unknown attributes, but the perfect realization of those very values which we recognize as the crown and glory of our human nature." [1]

The absolute distinction between the human and the divine might, however, be found in the doctrine of the Pharisaic teachers of Israel in the time of Jesus. C. G. Montefiore,[2] in a studiously impartial survey of the contemporary Jewish religion, admits that "man and God . . . were, as yet, perhaps, incapable of immediate relations with one another."

The mediation, the link or middle term, was the *Tora*, the Law of the Scriptures and all that could be elicited from it. Here, indeed, lies the contrast between the religion of Jesus and that of the dominant school of contemporary Jewish teachers. He brought man into direct contact with God. But "the Judaism of the first century was a legal religion, and its legalism was on the increase." [3]

"To observe the precepts of the Law was the duty and privilege of every Jew. Through the Law he served the

[1] A. S. Pringle-Pattison in *The Spirit*, edited by B. H. Streeter, p. 21. Contrast Bishop Gore in the *Church Times* of September 30, 1921, and in *Belief in God*, pp. 122 f.

[2] In Peake's *Commentary on the Bible*, p. 619.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 620.

Giver of the Law, and in doing God's declared and definite will he was glad. Because God loved Israel, God gave them many commandments, for in the multiplicity of commands lay the greater opportunity for goodness, for happiness, for reward." [1]

The Pharisaic idea of God was, therefore, formed in large measure by the Law, and from this fact followed important consequences. All the content of the Law was attributed to the same divine Lawgiver. The Law, however, contained ceremonial as well as ethical injunctions, and the elaborate cultus of the Priestly Code was regarded as part of the divine revelation. God, therefore, to the Pharisee, was One who *did* require sacrifice, and the blood of the victims flowed in abundance in the Temple, while Jesus was teaching the Pharisee to "go and learn what that meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice." [2] It is true, of course, that the Temple was not a near and living institution for the majority of Israelites, and that the laws concerning sacrifice would not touch the everyday life of the average man; but they must have contributed an important element to his thought about God.

There were many laws, however, which did affect everyday life: the laws about the Sabbath and the festivals, about food and cooking, about tithes and other dues, about the relations of the sexes and sexual impurities, about cleanness and uncleanness of various kinds. Such laws were the formulation of practices which in many cases were of immemorial antiquity, and which originated in the crude notions of primitive folk about the gods.[3] The continuance of these practices in Israel must have encouraged the survival of beliefs which progressive minds had long outgrown. These ceremonial laws were the chief matter of dispute between Jesus and the Pharisees, not only because they were an intolerable burden on the "little ones," but also because they encouraged and perpetuated a false idea of God, an idea which was ultimately materialistic.

The Law was not, however, wholly ceremonial. Its

[1] Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 620.
[2] Matt. ix. 13.
[3] Cf. Herford: *Pharisaism*, p. 162.

precepts enjoined chastity, righteousness, compassion in everyday life. Love of God and love of neighbour were among its requirements, although, even in the first century A.D., "neighbour" still meant a fellow Jew, and did not necessarily include the foreigner. But the New Testament is evidence of the fact that the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," was rising to a central position, and that some at least of the scribes had come to recognize that the value of the moral precepts of the Law was "much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." [1]

Yet such an insight into the relative value of moral and ceremonial requirements is, in fact, contrary to the general tendency of legalism, which equates all commandments in the dead level of a written code. Thus the divine character is misconceived and the idea of God incompletely moralized.[2] To detailed laws rewards and punishments are attached, so that a legal religion becomes a contract in which God condescends to bargain with his people. Thus the divine character is degraded, and bounds are set to the generous freedom of the love of God. The further consequences of legalism in the ethical sphere, whether for good or evil, need not be pursued; it is enough for our purpose to see its theological effects.

Partly a consequence, partly a cause of legalism, was the intense nationalism of the Pharisaic idea of God. He was, indeed, the God of all nations, for monotheism had become "the fundamental dogma and the life nerve of the entire religion," [3] but he was in a special sense the God of Israel. Only Israel worshipped him; only at Jerusalem could sacrifice be offered to him; and only to the Jews had his will been revealed in the Law. Hence, the limitations which polytheism imposes on the idea of God were in practice retained in Israel's conception. It was possible to think of God as having enemies and hating them, and it was fatally easy to regard the enemy of Israel as the enemy of God.

At the moment it is not necessary to take into account

[1] Mark xii. 32 f.
[2] Cf. Sanday, in *H.D.B.*, article on "Jesus Christ."
[3] Cf. Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 618.

the historical origins and development of legalism and nationalism, nor to consider the useful part that both played in their time in preserving the purity of Israel's faith in the One and Only God. Here the purpose is to show how both limited and degraded the lofty monotheism of Israel, and to point out the contrast between the Pharisaic idea of God and the idea of the heavenly Father taught by Jesus. Both Jesus and the Pharisees taught a monotheism, but while the one was universal and wholly ethical, the other was national (almost political), legalized, and, in consequence, imperfectly moralized.

Pharisaic legalism was the prevailing teaching in the time of Jesus. What other kinds of teaching were presented to Israel at this time?

Sadduceeism and Essenism immediately occur to the mind in answer to the question. But the Sadducees, though conservative and averse from the developments of the Law, differed little in theory from the Pharisees in their conception of God. They, too, were legalists, and if they held aloof from the doctrine of angels,[1] it was not because they had a more lively sense of the immediacy of man's communion with God. In any case, the influence of this small group of worldly priests and nobles upon the religion of their own or of any later age was negligible. They will not be referred to separately in our subsequent discussion.

The Essenes[2] stood apart from the main currents of first-century Judaism. They were a small ascetic sect, numbering about four thousand in the time of Christ. They were permeated with mysticism, and possessed peculiar customs, such as the veneration of the sun, and the rejection of animal sacrifice, which betray the working of foreign influences. What is genuinely Jewish in their opinions and customs comes near to Pharisaism, for they made the same combination of the moral and the ceremonial, and were equally strict in their observance of ritual washings and bodily purity. There is no evidence to show that they had any weight in the country, or exercised any influence upon the general trend of thought. Further-

[1] Acts xxiii. 8.

[2] Cf. Josephus, *Ant.*, xviii. 1, 5.

more, their peculiar opinions do not seem to be a development of any elements in Old Testament religion, and the sect may, therefore, be dismissed from our present consideration.

The "fourth philosophy" in Josephus's enumeration,[1] the Zealots, who were so famous for their ruthless fanaticism in the Jewish War, need not detain us either. The Zealots were an offshoot of the Pharisees, differing from them only in carrying nationalism to its furthest extreme, and in looking for the fulfilment of their hopes through a policy of open violence and rebellion rather than through the intervention of God himself to deliver the people of the Law in his appointed season.

We find, then, that the message of Jesus was addressed to a people among whom the effective religious teaching was that of the Pharisees. The Gospel is in contact, often in hostile contact, with the Law. But beneath all conceptions of God derived from the Law and the Prophets lay the primitive ideas which had come down from Israel's Semitic ancestry.

These primitive ideas we shall now proceed to study.

SUMMARY.

This chapter has distinguished three main interpretations of the idea of God in the days of Jesus. (1) From the survival of primitive ideas in modern Palestine and from hints in contemporary records it has been inferred that there were then ignorant peasants who, like their forefathers, worshipped divine beings at numerous sacred places, though nominally they believed in one supreme God. These people venerated sacred stones, trees, and waters as the abode or embodiment of divinities. They regarded such beings as magnified men, attributing to them both a physical organism and the moral qualities exhibited by human rulers. They sought to propitiate them by sacrifices and the ritual use of the blood of victims. Their conceptions of the supreme God were vague, and exercised little influence upon daily life. (2) Jesus taught a doctrine of God as the heavenly Father, in whom both authority and tenderness are found. Though Jesus makes no formal dogmatic statements, he teaches in a practical manner the unity, omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience of God. His idea of God is perfectly spiritual, rational, and moral. God enters into direct and immediate contact with men, and their all-

[1] Cf. Josephus, *Ant.*, xviii. 1, 6.

embracing duty is to love him. He freely forgives the repentant sinner, and does not require sacrifice and offering. All alike are his children without distinction of sex, race, or class. God is Spirit, and God is Love. (3) In the teaching of the Pharisees the Law was the mediating link between God and man. God was regarded chiefly as the Lawgiver. The Law contained ceremonial injunctions which perpetuated many of the crude notions of primitive religion, hindered the idea of God from becoming completely moral and spiritual, and introduced contradictions into the monotheism of the Pharisees. Legalism had for its corollary nationalism, which limited God's revelation and special favour to Israel.

The Sadducees and the Zealots did not differ fundamentally from the Pharisees in their idea of God. The Essenes were a small sect apart from the main currents of contemporary Judaism. Their practices, in so far as they were not Pharisaic, were of foreign origin. They need not receive further consideration in a historical inquiry into the idea of God in Israel.

# PART A

# PRIMITIVE IDEAS OF GOD IN THE POPULAR RELIGION—A RETROSPECT

## CHAPTER I

# EXAMPLES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT OF WORSHIP AT SACRED PLACES, STONES, TREES, AND WATERS

### MAṢṢEBOTH AND 'ASHERIM

In explaining the method to be adopted in this inquiry we showed that the evolution of ideas may be regarded as dispersive, and may be represented by lines radiating from a point. We suggested the probability that some lines may stop short at an early stage, indicating the impossibility of further progress in that direction. Such an end-stopped line seems to represent very well the nature religion of the Syrian peasant, which is now essentially what it was as far back as we can catch sight of it. Progress along this line seems to have stopped short at a time before the date of the earliest of the Old Testament records.

We find at all periods back to the time of Israel's first settlement in Canaan the same places and objects of worship, the same religious practices that appear now. We may infer that the ideas of God embodied in these outward facts have remained substantially the same.

We shall proceed, therefore, to set out examples from the Old Testament of these facts, and to draw from them conclusions with regard to the conceptions of deity which prevailed in the popular religion throughout the period under study. We shall look for references to local shrines, sacred stones, trees, and waters, to the worship of animals, to the cult of ancestors and holy men, and to the other features which we have seen surviving in the peasant religion of modern Palestine and Syria. We have called

this part of our study a retrospect simply, since it is impossible to trace development where progress has ceased long before our earliest records begin.

## Local Shrines.

The local shrines of whose existence in modern Palestine travellers afford abundant testimony were resorted to by Jewish worshippers in the latest times to which the Old Testament makes reference.

> They had been disestablished by the Deuteronomic legislation [1] of the seventh century B.C., and destroyed by the reformation of King Josiah.[2] A century before, the prophets had denounced them as seats of idolatry and immorality.[3]

Even later than the Old Testament period a passage in *Maccabees* leads us to suspect that Judas and his brethren, whose zeal for the Law is beyond suspicion, still cherished feelings of reverence for one at least of the old "high places." "They gathered themselves together to Mizpeh, over against Jerusalem; for in Mizpeh was there aforetime a place of prayer for Israel." [4] There they fasted, and brought the priests' garments, and the firstfruits, and the tithes. To-day Mizpeh is Nabi Samwil, five miles north-west of Jerusalem, and still a holy place, as its name testifies. It is the Mizpeh of the times of the Judges, where the "congregation was assembled as one man unto Yahwe," [5] and where "Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Yahwe," [6] and where Saul was chosen by lot as Israel's king.[7]

Jeremiah's earliest denunciation [8] of the high places may refer to a time before Josiah's reformation; but the reformation had been accomplished, and Jehoiakim was on the throne, when the prophet complained: "They have built the high places of Topheth . . . to burn their

[1] Deut. xii. 2 f.
[2] 2 Kings xxiii. 8.
[3] Amos iv. 4, v. 5; Hos. iv. 12 f., viii. 5, 11, xii. 11.
[4] 1 Macc. iii. 46.
[5] Judg. xx. 1.
[6] 1 Sam. vii. 5, 9.
[7] 1 Sam. x. 17 f.
[8] "For upon every high hill and under every green tree thou didst bow thyself" (Jer. ii. 20).

sons and daughters in the fire." [1] This complaint seems to refer to present practices rather than past.

In Ezekiel's days, shortly before the fall of Jerusalem, the local sanctuaries still stood to call forth Yahwe's message through the prophet: "Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places." [2] And in chapter xx. 29 the prophet plays upon the name: "What meaneth the *high place* (bâmâ) [3] whereunto ye go (bâ'îm)?" [4] And he comments: "So the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day."

The Trito-Isaiah, writing probably about 450 B.C., describes a party which clearly maintains the old Palestinian worship, and frequents the high places, and is in friendly relations with the Samaritans, descendants in part of the survivors of the Northern Kingdom, which had never accepted the law of the single sanctuary.[5]

Abundant evidence shows that down to the time of Josiah, or at least to that of Hezekiah, the high places not only existed, but were not regarded as inconsistent with the highest standard of religion. The Deuteronomic editor of *Kings* admits that they continued throughout the period of the Hebrew kingdoms until Josiah, though, believing, as he did, that the centralization of sacrificial worship was a Mosaic institution, he regards as an anomaly their retention by pious kings of Judah.[6] As for the kings of Israel, the Deuteronomist tells us that they built "high places" and "houses of the high places," i.e. temples, in all their cities, and the people worshipped there, as did also the mixed population after the Exile.[7]

In the days of Samuel and David the people ascended to the high places and offered sacrifice on them.[8] Eli was priest of a temple at Shiloh; [9] Jephthah spake all his words "before Yahwe," i.e. at his sanctuary at Mizpeh; [10] and Gideon set up a place of worship at Ophrah.[11]

[1] Jer. vii. 31.
[2] Ezek. vi. 3. Cf. xvi. 16, xx. 29, xxxvi. 2.
[3] בָּמָה. [4] בָּאִים.
[5] Isa. lvii. 5–7, lxv. 3, 4, lxvi. 17.
[6] 2 Kings xii. 3, xiv. 4, xv. 4, 35.
[7] 1 Kings xii. 31; 2 Kings xvii. 9, 11, xvii. 29, 32.
[8] 1 Sam. ix. 12–25, x. 5, 13. [9] 1 Sam. i. 3, 9.
[10] Judg. xi. 11. [11] Judg. viii. 27.

The early documents of *Genesis* mention as holy places Shechem, Beersheba, Beth-el, and Galeed, and their sanctity is explained by the fact that the patriarchs worshipped at them.[1]

The legislation of the E document contemplates the erection of altars at every place sanctified by a theophany.[2]

We find, therefore, in the earliest, as in the latest, Old Testament writings evidence of divine worship at a plurality of sacred places. What is the significance of this fact?

To the modern educated Christian, who regards it as fitting and necessary that each local group of worshippers should have its house of God, it means little; but to the reformers of Josiah's day a plurality of sanctuaries signified plurality in the Godhead. It is not without reason that we have from one and the same writer, or from two writers of closely kindred spirit, the emphatic declaration: "Yahwe our God is one Yahwe," [3] and also the solemn warning: "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest." [4] We may surely accept the judgement of contemporaries, confirmed, as it is, by the evidence of survivals already cited, and may conclude that the worshippers at the local sanctuaries, while in theory acknowledging the one Yahwe, Israel's God, in practice brought their sacrifices to the god of their own place, whom they felt to be somehow different from the God of Jerusalem, or the god of a neighbouring place.

Such a localizing and multiplying of the Godhead was, perhaps, inevitable, when material sacrifices were offered at the altar, and were believed to be conveyed then and there, in whole or in part, to the deity.

The Deuteronomic writers [5] and the Prophets,[6] indeed, roundly accuse the people of offering their sacrifices to the Canaanite gods, the Ba'alim. The people might have repudiated the charge; but when they called Yahwe a

[1] Gen. xii. 6 (J), xxi. 33 (JE), xxvi. 25 (J), xxviii. 22 (JE), xxxi. 54 E.), xxxv. 7 (E), xlvi. 1 (JE).
[2] Exod. xx. 24. [3] Deut. vi. 4. [4] Deut. xii. 13.
[5] Judg. ii. 11, iii. 7, viii. 33, x. 6; 1 Sam. vii. 4, xii. 10.
[6] Hos. ii. 13, 17 (15, 19); Jer. ii. 23, ix. 14 (13).

ba'al,[1] and approached him at sanctuaries which had once belonged to the Canaanites, with rites which were essentially the same as theirs, they lay open to the charge.

## Sacred Stones.

Connected in many cases with the "high places" were the sacred stones, trees, and waters that are mentioned so often in the Old Testament.

Chief among the sacred stones is the pillar that Jacob set up at Beth-el, calling it a "god's house."[2]

At Gilgal, another of Israel's famous sanctuaries, were the stones[3] which tradition explained as a memorial of the crossing of the Jordan by the host of Israel.

At Shechem there was a great stone under the oak by the sanctuary of Yahwe, which the E document[4] asserts to have been set up by Joshua.

Eben-ezer, according to the Deuteronomic editor of the books of *Samuel*,[5] was a stone set up as a memorial of Israel's victory over the Philistines; but the older material (E)[6] mentions Eben-ezer as Israel's camping place at the earlier battle in which Israel was defeated. We may regard the stone as a sacred object of unknown antiquity, which the Deuteronomist rendered harmless from his point of view by describing it as a simple memorial erected by Samuel.

Gibeon was a high place of acknowledged sanctity, and we are told incidentally that there was a great stone there.[7]

Adonijah sacrificed "sheep and oxen and fatlings by the stone of Zoheleth,"[8] and it is conjectured by Robertson Smith that this stone with the sacred spring near by—En-Rogel—marks the site of the original sanctuary of Jerusalem.[9]

As late as the middle of the fifth century B.C. there

[1] Hos. ii. 16 (18). Cf. the name of one of David's heroes, Bealiah (בְּעַלְיָה), "Yahwe is ba'al" (1 Chron. xii. 5).

[2] Gen. xxviii. 18 f.

[3] Probably, as the name implies, a circle of stones (Josh iv. 5, 20 ff.).

[4] Josh. xxiv. 26.

[5] 1 Sam. vii. 12.

[6] 1 Sam. iv. 1.

[7] 1 Kings iii. 4; 2 Sam. xx. 8.

[8] אֶבֶן־הַזֹּחֶלֶת, the Serpent's Stone (1 Kings i. 9).

[9] *Religion of the Semites*, ed. 2, p. 172 *n*.

were those who still resorted to the sacred stones, for we read in the Trito-Isaiah : "Among the smooth stones of the valley is thy portion : even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered an oblation." [1]

Thus the Old Testament writers allow us to see not only that there were in Canaan sacred stones of immemorial antiquity, but also that the veneration of them among sections of the people continued to a time long after the Exile. Indeed, we may be sure that it never ceased at any time, since, as we have learned, it goes on even now among the inhabitants of Israel's ancient land.

## Sacred Trees.

Sacred trees are mentioned in the Old Testament even more often than sacred stones, and again the references are to many different periods of the national life.

In the passage of Trito-Isaiah just cited, worship at the sacred trees is charged against the same people who were offering their oblation to the smooth stones of the valley ; for "they inflamed themselves among the terebinths under every luxuriant tree." [2]

But they were introducing no novelty : their ancestors had done the same in the last days of Judah's kingdom, and Ezekiel had protested in vain.[3]

A century before that time Isaiah declares [4] that the Judæans of his time should be ashamed of the oaks (or terebinths) which they had desired ; and not many years earlier, in Northern Israel, Hosea [5] denounced the sacrifices under oaks and poplars and terebinths.

The Deuteronomic reform sought, indeed, to banish the sacred trees from legitimate religion,[6] but until then they were apparently regarded as without offence, and their sanctity was accounted for by their connexion with the patriarchs and heroes of old time.

For example, a writer of the Northern Kingdom in the time of Jeroboam II invokes upon the tribe of Joseph the

[1] Isa. lvii. 6. R.V., with recent commentators, renders : "smooth stones." Heb. בְּחַלְקֵי־נַחַל.

[2] Isa. lvii. 5. [3] Ezek. vi. 13. [4] Isa. i. 29.

[5] Hos. iv. 13. [6] Deut. xii. 3.

"good will of him that dwelt in the bush," referring obviously to the theophany to Moses in Midian.[1]

The early stratum of narrative in the books of *Samuel* (J?) mentions the balsam trees which, like the oaks of Dodona, gave oracles, and the sound of marching was heard in their tops when Yahwe went out before David against the Philistines.[2]

It was by the oak that was in Ophrah that the angel of Yahwe appeared to Gideon.[3] "By the oak of the pillar that was in Shechem" the men of Shechem made Abimelech king[4]; and, when they rebelled, and Abimelech marched against them, one of his companies came by the way of the "Augurs' Oak."[5]

Deborah dwelt under the "palm tree of Deborah" between Ramah and Beth-el;[6] and the sanctity of the oak at Beth-el is attributed to the fact that another Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, was buried beneath it.[7]

Most famous of all the sacred trees were the oaks of Mamre, where, according to J,[8] Abraham dwelt, and built an altar to Yahwe.

> The old worship survived here into Christian times, and the Church historian Sozomenus records that Jews and Greeks and Christians took part in it. "Each after the manner of his faith does honour to the place, some praying to the God of all, some invoking the angels, and pouring wine, or offering incense, or an ox, or a goat, or a sheep."[9]

Abraham planted also a tamarisk in Beersheba, according to JE,[10] and there called on the name of Yahwe, the everlasting God.

The oak at Shechem, which figures in the story of Abimelech, was clearly regarded as an ancient sanctuary. E[11] explains that under it Jacob buried the strange gods of his household. But other explanations were current, and

[1] Deut. xxxiii. 16. Cf. Exod. iii. 4.
[2] 2 Sam. v. 24.
[3] Judg. vi. 11.
[4] Judg. ix. 6.
[5] Judg. ix. 37. אֵלוֹן־מְעוֹנְנִים.
[6] Judg. iv. 5.
[7] אַלּוֹן־בָּכוּת, "the Oak of Weeping" (Gen. xxxv. 8).
[8] Gen. xiii. 18, xiv. 13, xviii. 1.
[9] Sozomenus: *Historia Eccles.*, ii. 4. Migne, LXVII, 941, 4.
[10] Gen. xxi. 33.
[11] Gen. xxxv. 4.

the same oak is mentioned by J[1] and called by him the "oak of Moreh," i.e. of the Seer. The name suggests that there was an oracle connected with the tree, and J claims sanctuary and oracle for Israel by attributing its foundation to Abraham. It was there that Yahwe appeared to him, and there he built an altar.

These examples warrant the assertion that the sacred trees were intimately connected with the popular worship from the earliest times, and did not lose their sanctity even after Christianity became the nominal religion of the country.

### Sacred Waters.

The Old Testament refers less frequently, but still unmistakably, to sacred waters.

In the days of Amos the Israelites swore by the well of Beersheba, and possibly also by the waters of Dan, where one of the sources of the Jordan bubbles up from the ground in a couple of wells.[2]

When Adonijah sought the succession to David's throne, he held his sacrificial feast at the fountains of En-Rogel. Here was the Serpent's Stone,[3] so that we may reasonably identify these waters with the Dragon's Well[4] towards which Nehemiah rode as he made his circuit of the ruined walls of Jerusalem.

Gihon was another fountain at Jerusalem,[5] and of special sanctity, since it was chosen for the place of Solomon's coronation.

Kadesh-Barnea was an important station of the tribes in the time of the Wandering, and there was the "Fountain of Judgement" (En-Mishpat) and the "Waters of Controversy" (Meribah)[6]—names which leave little doubt that here was an oracle or a priesthood that gave judgement at the sanctuary.

The well at Beersheba to which Amos refers was clearly of long-standing sanctity, dating back, according to E,

[1] Gen. xii. 6. Cf. *B.D.B.*, "The Teacher's Terebinth."
[2] Amos viii. 14.
[3] 1 Kings i. 9, אֶבֶן־הַזֹּחֶלֶת.
[4] Neh. ii. 13, עֵין־הַתַּנִּין.
[5] 1 Kings i. 38.
[6] Gen. xiv. 7. Cf. Num. xx. 13.

to the day when Abraham and Abimelech swore to a covenant there, and hence arose the name "Well of the Oath." [1]

J gives a more probable etymology, when he connects the name (בְּאֵר־שֶׁבַע = "Well of Seven") with the seven lambs given in token of Abraham's right to the waters.[2]

J has, however, another tradition to the effect that Isaac names the well,[3] when the strife between him and Abimelech had ended, and a covenant had been made. It is evident that the well was regarded as sacred, and that when the origin of its sanctity was forgotten or rejected, divergent traditions were formed to account for the fact.

Beer-lahai-roi was another well, whose sacred character was accounted for in like manner by bringing it within the Abrahamite cycle of legends; but J's impossible etymology [4] again clearly shows that the legend is a comparatively late one invented to explain a fact whose real origin had long been forgotten.

The examples cited are mostly in the early literature, but when we remember that in our Lord's day there was a pool at Jerusalem—Bethesda—to which the people still resorted for healing,[5] we cannot doubt that the paucity of examples in the Old Testament is accidental, and that the sacred waters had throughout a place in the popular religion of Israel.

### Maṣṣeboth and 'Asherim.

Finally, we have to consider the *Maṣṣeba* and the *'Ashera*. The *maṣṣeba* is a pillar or obelisk of stone *set up*,[6] as its name implies, for some special purpose. It may be a monument such as Absalom erected,[7] or the sign of an agreement, as when Jacob set up a *maṣṣeba* in token of his covenant with Laban,[8] but usually it is mentioned in association with the altar.

[1] Gen. xxi. 31.
[2] Cf. Gen. xxi. 28–30.
[3] Gen. xxvi. 33.
[4] Gen. xvi. 14.
[5] John v. 2 ff.
[6] נָצַב Hiph., to set up. Hence מַצֵּבָה.
[7] 2 Sam. xviii. 18.
[8] Gen. xxxi. 45 ff.

The Deuteronomic Code[1] forbids the erection of a *maṣṣeba* beside the altar of Yahwe, and the Deuteronomic editor of *Kings*[2] emphatically condemns both Israel and Judah because they did set up *maṣṣeboth* "upon every high hill and under every green tree."[3] The prohibition of the code and the condemnation of *Kings* imply that they had previously been part of the *sacra* of the local sanctuaries. E, indeed, records the fact that Moses himself set up twelve *maṣṣeboth* by the altar at Sinai.[4] Hosea, also, counts them among the normal apparatus of worship in his day.[5]

It is, however, in the story of Jacob at Beth-el that we have the most instructive account of a *maṣṣeba*. The E document preserves the tradition that Jacob set up the stone on which his head was resting when God appeared to him for a *maṣṣeba*, and that, not merely as a memorial of his vision, but as a "God's house"; and on the stone itself he poured his libation.[6] When he returned from Paddan-Aram he built an altar there, for where "the gods had appeared to him" there they might be found again.[7]

It may be conjectured that at Beth-el was a stone—a *maṣṣeba*—which was the most sacred object in the sanctuary; to it the name Beth-el specially belonged; upon it were poured libations of oil according to the traditional ritual of the place. Among the priests at Beth-el the maintenance of the rite and the application of the name were "petrified customs," whose meaning was forgotten. Therefore they accounted for the rite and the name by a legend; it was Jacob who had so named the stone, and first poured oil upon it. The editor of E preserved the legend, and incidentally the evidence of contemporary custom.

This conjecture cannot, of course, be proved, but it becomes probable when we consider how many myths and legends elsewhere have arisen in a similar manner as explanations of traditional rites and customs.

[1] Deut. xvi. 22. [2] 1 Kings xiv. 23. [3] 2 Kings xvii. 10.
[4] Exod. xxiv. 4. Samaritan Text and LXX read "stones."
[5] Hos. iii. 4, x. 1, 2. [6] Gen. xxviii. 18 f.
[7] Gen. xxxv. 7. אלהים with the plural verb seems to include the angels.

König, it is true, rejects such a conjecture, and argues that the text of *Genesis* does not warrant our regarding the stone as more than a memorial; that the pouring of oil upon it is no more than its consecration by anointing as a memorial, or as an altar, or foundation stone. Further, he insists that it is the place and not the stone which is called "God's house."

This is undeniably the fact in *Genesis* xxviii. 19; but his argument that a correct rendering of the text in *Genesis* xxviii. 22 ("und deiser Stein, den ich als eine Massebe aufgestellt habe, soll ein Gotteshaus *werden*") supports the conception of the stone as a memorial, not a "fetish," seems scarcely justified. Whatever be the tense of the verb, the conception of the stone as a divine abode is present in the words.

The final argument of König is that one and the same narrator (E) cannot have reported that Jacob caused his household to put away the images of their gods [1] while he himself worshipped a "fetish." [2]

We may admit that the Elohist himself did not regard the stone at Beth-el as a "fetish," but as a memorial of a theophany; yet this did not prevent him from preserving clear traces of the older belief that the stone was the abode of a divinity who inspired Jacob's dream, and that this was the reason why the stone became a *maṣṣeba*, and continued to be an object of popular veneration. We are not now dealing with the theology of the Elohist; we are looking for hints and allusions in his writings which show that his idea of God was not the only one held in Israel, and that among the people the idea of a special divinity—an *'el*—in particular places, and connected with particular sacred objects, was tenaciously maintained throughout the historical period, even as it persists to this day.

König admits, grudgingly, that the belief that trees are the abode of divine beings may be discovered in modern Syria and Palestine, but he denies that the belief is to be carried back into antiquity; "for popular belief is often degenerate: exempla sunt odiosa!" [3]

What, however, is properly meant by degeneration in religion? Is it not that the adherents of a higher faith have taken up into their religion elements from the lower culture of their environment? If, then, popular belief in modern Palestine is degenerate, the degeneration proves our point that the crude ideas of "animism" were always there in the environment, alongside, it may be, the conceptions of Islam, of Christianity, of the Law and the Prophets.

[1] Gen. xxxv. 1–5.
[2] König: *Geschichte der A.T. Religion*, pp. 85–87.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 80.

The *'ashera*, like the *maṣṣeba*, is mentioned frequently in connection with the altar, and inasmuch as it is "planted," [1] "cut down," [2], or "burnt," [3] it may be regarded as a sacred tree, or pole, standing near the altar.

The A.V. translates the name as "grove," and sacred groves are known to us among many peoples. This meaning, however, does not suit the context in some places where the name occurs, nor does it agree with the archæological evidence.[4] The R.V. merely transliterates the Hebrew word as Ashera (plural Asherim), and explains in a note to *Exodus* xxxiv, 13 that the Asherim were "probably the wooden symbols of a goddess Ashera."

Stade, Wellhausen, and Robertson Smith think only of the sacred pole, and reject the evidence offered for the existence of the goddess.[5]

Probably, in some cases, the goddess or her symbol may be denoted by the name,[6] but in others it is a general term like *maṣṣeba*, and denotes one of the ordinary *sacra* of the Canaanite sanctuaries. As such the *'ashera* is condemned by *Kings* and prohibited by *Deuteronomy*, but Hosea does not mention it as being, like the *maṣṣeba*, part of the ordinary apparatus of worship in his day.[7] Feeling may have been roused against it at a time when the *maṣṣeba* still gave no offence. If so, this may be due to the identification of the *'ashera* with the symbol of a heathen goddess.

In general, however, we may regard the *'ashera* as a substitute for the naturally occurring sacred tree, just as the *maṣṣeba* was a substitute for the natural rock.

## Conclusions.

What is the conclusion to be drawn from this abundant evidence of the existence in many parts of Israel's territory, and throughout the national history from the settlement in Canaan till long after the Exile, of sacred stones, trees, and waters connected with the local sanctuaries?

[1] Deut. xvi. 21.
[2] 2 Kings xxiii. 14.
[3] Judg. vi. 26.
[4] Cf. Nowack: *Hebr. Arch.*, ii. 19.
[5] Cf. *B.D.B.*, p. 81.
[6] Cf. Burney: *Judges*, pp. 195 ff.
[7] Hos. iii. 4.

We have seen that in the judgement of the Deuteronomist the multiplication of sacrificial altars involved a multiplication of gods, and that in effect the Israelite who brought his offering to the altar of his village sacrificed not to Yahwe but to the village god, the local Ba'al whom the Canaanites had worshipped before Israel took possession of the land together with its holy places. Jeremiah also complains: "According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah." [1]

But if, before the reformation of Josiah, the majority in Israel associated deity with stones, trees, and waters, and after the reformation a minority continued to do so, we may draw inferences from this fact as to the ideas of God entertained by them.

We have learned that the modern Syrian peasant believes that his sacred stone or tree or fountain is the habitation of a divine spirit. His belief is no isolated phenomenon. Tylor [2] and Frazer [3] (to mention no others) have collected instances from all parts of the world of the worship of spirits or deities embodied in natural objects or resident in them. These instances are taken not only from nations in the lower stage of culture, but also from the state religion of China, and the nature religions of Greece and Rome, and they linger on in Christendom to modern times as superstitious survivals.

Worship of natural objects is the outcome of the primitive theory known as Animism, according to which man's conception of himself as a body with an indwelling soul is extended to the world about him. As the soul in himself was the cause of life and action, so *things* which lived and moved had souls. By an extension of this analogy—influenced, perhaps, by the fact that, when souls appeared in dreams, they brought objects with them—souls were attributed also to what we recognize only as lifeless things.[4] Further, as the souls of men may exist apart from their bodies, and appear to the primitive beholder as free spirits, so free spirits existed in the natural world, and were able

[1] Jer. ii. 28.
[2] *Primitive Culture*, vol. i, chap. v.
[3] *Folk Lore in the O.T.*, vol. iii, chap. xv. f.
[4] Cf. Tylor, *op. cit.*, i. 478 ff.

at their will to take up their abode in tree or rock, in fountain or stream.

The two conceptions of animating souls and presiding spirits are developments from the same fundamental idea: *Nature throughout is animated.*

Now, if animism is universal at a certain stage of culture, and if its prevalence cannot be due to borrowing by one people from another—two suppositions which the evidence accumulated by anthropologists makes highly probable—then animism may be taken as a theory by which, reasoning from experience by analogy, the normal human mind, at a certain level of culture, seeks to rationalize the world around.

The presumption, then, would be that Israel, or its component elements, passed through an animistic stage, and that the belief in nature-spirits, at one time universal, was gradually abandoned in the higher religious thought, while it maintained its hold on the less progressive portions of the community.

The only question would be whether this stage had been left behind before Israel became a nation. However, the outward signs of animism, the sacred tree, stone, and well, are found in Israel throughout the historic period. The denunciations of prophets and lawgivers prove that worship was paid to them, and the conclusion must be that many of the people, and at times, perhaps, the majority of the people, thought that a divine spirit might, and did, exist in the well or fountain that brought fertility to their fields, in the green tree whose shade gave refreshment, in the rock that cast its shadow on a weary land. And when the village community set up its altar to worship the god who gave increase to the products of their land, they set up beside it a stone—the *maṣṣeba*—and a tree or tree-stump—the *'ashera*—to be the home of the god, to which he might resort, and where his worshippers might seek and find him. Stone, tree, and living waters, or in their place the artificial *maṣṣeba* and *'ashera*, are not mere symbols, as a cross might be in a Christian church, but they are the "permanent visible object, at which and through which the worshippers came into direct contact with the god." [1]

[1] Robertson Smith: *Religion of the Semites*, ed. 2, p. 166.

SUMMARY.

References to the existence of *local sanctuaries* are found in documents of every period, e.g. in 1 *Maccabees*, 3 *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Jeremiah*, *Kings*, *Samuel*, the J and E documents. They were forbidden by the legislation of *Deuteronomy*. The Deuteronomic writers and the prophets regarded sacrifices at these "high places" as offered to the Ba'alim. *Sacred stones* are referred to in 3 *Isaiah*, 1 *Kings*, 1 *Samuel*, *Joshua*, and *Genesis*. *Sacred trees* are frequently mentioned, e.g. in 3 *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Hosea*, *Deuteronomy*, 2 *Samuel*, *Judges*, J and E. *Sacred waters* are less often noticed, but references are found in *Amos*, *Kings*, J and E. The *maṣṣeboth* and *'asherim* were pillars and trees (or poles) set up by the altars as substitutes for the naturally occurring stone or tree. They were forbidden by *Deuteronomy*, but were regarded as legitimate in earlier times. The conclusion from the evidence is that some Israelites at all times worshipped local deities, whom they associated with notable stones, trees, and waters. Such worship is the outcome of animism—the belief that nature throughout is animated, and that men may enter into relations with the spirits which animate or preside over natural objects.

CHAPTER II

# THE WORSHIP OF ANIMALS—TOTEMISM—ANIMISM

## ANIMISM AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE DEAD. THE WORSHIP OF ANCESTORS

### Animal Worship.

Even we ourselves, much as our conceptions of nature have changed, can feel, especially when we are under the spell of a poet's imagination, some sympathy with primitive men in their recognition of gods in trees and living fountains. But animism, in its confidence that the supernatural is everywhere, thinks of animals also as possible incarnations of the divine. To us the idea is, no doubt, repulsive, but from many quarters of the globe anthropologists gather instances of the worship of animals among peoples of the lower culture in ancient and modern times. In ancient Egypt this worship lasted on among a highly civilized people. Some of the gods and goddesses of the Greeks, also, betray their original animal character.

Such worship may take upon itself various forms: it may be simply the worship of the beast as beast, the possessor of powers and qualities admired or feared by men; it may be the worship in it of an incarnate deity, or of a totem, i.e. a tribe-ancestor. But in one form or another it seems to be found wherever animism is the prevalent mode of thought.

We are therefore led to ask whether in ancient Israel animal worship ever existed, and, if so, whether it continued to exist in historical times. An affirmative answer to these questions seems to be justified by evidence both direct and indirect.

We may begin by referring to the description of the rites practised by the heathenish pro-Samaritan party denounced by the Trito-Isaiah. They are the "people of the land," who had not shared in the progress of the exiles towards a more spiritual religion. They worshipped Yahwe, no doubt, but they continued to practise rites and to cherish beliefs which had long been banished from more enlightened circles in Israel. These were they which ate "swine's flesh, and the broth of abominable (i.e unclean) things was in their vessels." [1] These were they that worshipped in the gardens, "eating swine's flesh and creeping things and the mouse." [2] These were they who combined the legitimate ritual of Yahwe with the old heathen cultus, for the prophet declares: "He that killeth an ox is as he that slayeth a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb as he that breaketh a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation as he that offereth swine's blood." [3] The meaning of the charge seems to be that this party not only offered in sacrifice the legitimate victims (the ox and the lamb) and the meal-offering, but also took part in human sacrifice, and offered the swine and the dog in rites which were to them of no ordinary potency.

Mouse, swine, dog, creeping things—all these were regarded in Israel as unclean in the highest degree, and contact with them was prohibited by law and general custom. "So strict a taboo," says Robertson Smith,[4] "can hardly be explained except by supposing that they had supernatural and demoniac qualities." Again, "When an unclean animal is sacrificed, it is also a sacred animal." Finally, "the victim is not only a sacred animal, but an animal kindred to the deity to which it is sacrificed." [5]

If Robertson Smith is justified in tracing back this line of thought from unclean to sacred, and from sacred to divine, then we may conclude that the party denounced by Trito-Isaiah was still possessed by the ideas of primitive animism, and found in animal worship an expression of its religious feelings and a means of securing supernatural help.

[1] Isa. lxv. 4.
[2] Isa. lxvi. 17, reading שֶׂרֶץ for שֶׁקֶץ.
[3] Isa. lxvi. 3.
[4] *Religion of the Semites*, ed. 2, pp. 293 f.
[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 290.

If we go backward a century and more to the troubled times of Zedekiah's reign, we discover direct evidence of animal worship, practised not in some remote corner of Judæa, but in the capital and in the very Temple of Yahwe himself. Ezekiel records what he saw in vision, when the spirit brought him to the Temple courts. "So I went in and saw: and behold, every form of creeping things, and of abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about." [1]

Some scholars think that the animal worship here described was a recent importation from Egypt or Babylon, but it seems better to regard it as the emergence into light of a type of religion which had been transmitted from the earliest times. The teaching of priests and prophets had not succeeded in eradicating it, and at the beginning of the sixth century B.C.[2] it was still sufficiently strong to be a menace to nobler forms of faith. It was the same superstition of which we have already caught a glimpse in the pages of Trito-Isaiah.[3]

Nearly contemporary with Ezekiel is the code of law in *Leviticus* known as the Holiness Code (H).[4] In this occurs the prohibition: "They shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices unto the he-goats (R.V. satyrs)." [5] The word translated "he-goat" or "satyr" is *sa'ir*,[6] i.e. "hairy one." It is the common word for "he-goat," but in this passage and in 2 *Kings* xxiii. 8 f.,[7] 2 *Chronicles* xi. 15, *Isaiah* xiii. 21, xxxiv. 14, it evidently denotes demons in goat-like form. *Chronicles*[8] states that Jeroboam "appointed priests for the he-goats," while in *Isaiah*[9] the he-goats (*se'irim*) haunt desolate ruins along with *Lilith*, the night-demon. The *se'irim*[10] and *Lilith* are like the *Jinn* of Arabia, which differ from the gods, not in their essential nature, but in the moral fact that, while the gods have fixed and friendly relations with men, the *jinn* are strangers and *ipso facto* enemies.[11]

[1] Ezek. viii. 10.
[2] The date of Ezekiel.
[3] *Vide supra*.
[4] Lev. xvii–xxvi.
[5] Lev. xvii. 7.
[6] שָׂעִיר.
[7] Reading הַשְּׂעִרִים for הַשֵּׁדִים.
[8] 2 Chron. xi. 15.
[9] xiii. 21.
[10] שְׂעִירִים.
[11] Cf. Robertson Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

The prohibition of *Leviticus* xvii. 7 occurs as part of a general prohibition of all sacrifices except at the central sanctuary: no longer are sacrifices to be offered in the open field. The prohibition implies the previous currency of the practice. No doubt the simple countryman had believed that he offered his sacrifices to Yahwe, or at least to the local god (the *ba'al* of the place), and it is the law-giver who degrades them to an offering to the field-demons. But, granting this, the passage remains as a testimony to the idea that the supernatural, if not the truly divine, could appear in animal shape.

There is clear evidence of animal worship in the eighth century B.C. The historian records how Hezekiah "brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it." [1] The idol was the image of a serpent-god, so old that its origin was forgotten, and popular imagination could attribute it to Moses himself. There are no grounds for supposing it to have been a mere memorial, or a symbol of Yahwe. Far more probably it points to a survival of serpent-worship in the popular religion—a cult which, strange and repulsive as it may seem to-day, was widely spread in the ancient world, and re-appeared, so at any rate it was said, among the semi-Christian sect of the Ophites.[2]

The names applied to the ancient sanctuaries at Jerusalem—the Serpent's Stone and the Dragon's Well—also point to the sacred character of the snake.

Finally, we meet with the serpent as one of the actors in the Yahwistic drama of the Fall. The fact that in this the serpent speaks and possesses occult knowledge shows that J, though he asserts that the serpent was but a creature of Yahwe, found no difficulty in ascribing supernatural powers to it. Probably, in an older form of the story, the serpent was a demon or a god.

Nöldeke sums up thus: "The mysterious, demonic character of the serpent might easily produce in the simple

[1] 2 Kings xviii. 4.
[2] Cf. *Epiphan. Adv. Haeres.*, xxxvii., and *Tert. De Praescript. contra Haereticos*, 47.

Semitic nomads the belief that there dwelt in it something divine." [1]

The distinction between clean and unclean animals has already been touched upon. It remains to be considered a little more fully before this part of our subject is left, for it may have a bearing upon the worship of animals. The distinction is a very ancient one. The later documents of the Old Testament assign it, indeed, to Moses, but J thinks of it as going back to the very beginning and inherent in the nature of things. It belongs certainly to the oldest mode of life of which the common consciousness in Israel retained any recollection.

The classification of animals in the later codes is elaborate and comprehensive, but primarily the clean animals which are sacrificed and eaten are those of the flock and the herd—cattle, sheep, and goats. These are the animals which formed so important a part of the primitive nomadic groups out of which grew the Israelite tribes. Ordinarily the nomad does not kill these animals for food, but lives upon their milk. When one is slain, the act is no mere casual killing but a solemn ceremony, and the whole community partakes of the feast upon the victim. The whole community includes, however, the god of the community as well as men, and the god's portion is offered to him, usually by the outpouring of the blood at the altar. But participation in common food implies, in primitive thought, a common life, kinship. The god and his worshippers are of one kin, and the animals that provide the sacrifice are within it too. Again, therefore, we meet with the idea of the animal as an embodiment of the divine life.

The unclean animal is neither eaten nor sacrificed. It lies outside the circle of the community. With it the clan and its god have no relation. But the distinction between clean and unclean is not drawn everywhere along the same line. The animal that is unclean to one group may be clean to another, i.e. fit for sacrifice, and therefore

[1] " Das geheimnisvolle, dämonische Wesen der Schlange . . . konnte in dem einfachen semitischen Hirten leicht den Glauben erzeugen, in ihr wohne etwas Göttliches." *Z.V.P.*, i. 413.

sacred to the god of the latter group, or, as primitive man thought, the embodiment of that god.

The clean animal, therefore, is one which is in close relation to the god of the community; the unclean is in relation to an alien god, or to some demon of the waste with whom no group of men is allied.

Such conceptions of the kinship of gods with men on the one hand, and with animals on the other, may have been one, if only one, of the possible causes of the distinction between clean and unclean in Israel. They may serve also as a partial explanation of the choice of the bull as a symbol of Yahwe in the Northern Kingdom.[1] They may also lie behind the tribal names which seem to be those of animals (Leah,the wild cow; Rachel, the ewe; Simeon, the wolf, etc.).

We recognize here a possible trace of that type of social organization so widely spread among primitive people, which is known as totemism. It would be, however, an error to speak of totemism in Israel in the historic period, though it may lie in the dim background of Israel's distant past. There is no allusion in the Old Testament to the worship of the cow, the ewe, or the wolf by the Leah, Rachel and Simeon tribes respectively. Leah, Rachel, and Simeon have become mere names, and their appellative force has been forgotten. The other characteristic marks of totemism are absent also from the institutions of Israel.[2]

The conclusion to which the evidence just reviewed would seem to point is that the popular religion of Israel, which readily recognized the abode of the divine in rock, tree, and well, was not unfamiliar with the idea that a divine spirit might animate animals also. The facts reviewed are not all equally clear in their significance, and some freedom of conjecture has been used; but the ideas whose presence in historic Israel has been asserted are all such as spring naturally from the fundamental belief that, in nature as in man, visible form is the manifestation of an indwelling spirit, and that man in his need can

[1] 1 Kings xii. 28.
[2] See article "Totemism" in *E.R.E.* and note attached below.

find help in the friendly spirits whose mysterious powers are at work around him.

> The following facts are characteristic of totemism : (1) Bands or clans of men each united among themselves by kinship, real or fictitious ; (2) the clan is distinguished by the name of some species of animal or plant, or more rarely of some other natural phenomenon, such as the sun, rain, etc. ; (3) the species or object which gives its name to the clan is conceived as related to the clan, and to every member of it, in some mystic way, often genetically, and in this case every individual specimen of the object, where it is an animal or plant, is regarded as belonging to the clan ; (4) such species, or object, is usually the subject of a religious or quasi-religious emotion, and every individual specimen is the subject of taboos or prohibitions : it may not be injured or killed or (where eatable) eaten ; (5) the members of the clan are entitled to mutual defence, protection, and resentment of injuries. They may not marry or have sexual intercourse within the clan.[1]

## The Survival of the Dead and the Worship of Ancestors.

Among the spirits with which animism peoples the world are the spirits of the dead. Set free from the limitations of the body, they are readily credited with enhanced powers for good or evil. Their help is sought, or their hurtful activities averted ; they are reverenced or feared. They may, in fact, become friendly gods or hostile demons. It is specially the spirits of dead kinsmen, or of those who in their lifetime held high place in the estimation of the community, who are regarded as divine and approached with worship.

In many religions, notably those of China and of ancient Rome, the worship of ancestors and of deified men has played a great part. The question inevitably suggests itself whether the spirits of dead men were worshipped in Israel.

We have already seen that the natives of Syria and Palestine at the present day approach the tombs of holy men with religious devotion, and regard an oath by the name of the *weli* as more sacred than one by the name of

[1] Abbreviated from article "Totemism" in *E.R.E.*

God himself. The spirits of departed *welis* are in every-day life the divine powers whom the peasants fear and honour, and to whom they appeal for help in the hour of need.[1] We may reasonably suspect that the people who lived on the same soil in bygone ages paid a like reverence to the spirits of the dead, and that we shall discover traces of ancestor-worship and of "saint- or hero-worship" in ancient Israel.

There is, however, a division of opinion among scholars on this point. H. P. Smith[2] asserts that "there is a growing consensus of opinion that the Hebrews, like all other peoples at a certain stage of thought, worshipped these spirits." This view is supported by Charles[3] in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, by Budde,[4] Marti[5] and Loisy.[6]

Kautzsch,[7] on the other hand, holds that "the alleged indications of ancestor-worship are all exposed to more or less serious objections." König also gives a negative answer to the question whether ancestor-worship can be proved to be an older stage of the religion of Israel, and to continue into later times as an element in the "popular religion."[8] To the argument of Stade: "The antiquity and prevalence of hero-worship is proved by the fact that it meets us even now in Palestine among Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans,"[9] he replies with the exclamation: "As if the worship of saints which is now practised in a part of Christendom could prove anything with regard to the existence of this worship in the primitive ages of Christianity!"[10]

[1] See Curtiss, *op. cit.*, and Bliss, *Religions of Palestine*, pp. 227–231; Lods, *Croyance à la vie future et le culte des morts dans l'antiquité israélite*, i. 164, ii. 136 f.

[2] *Religion of Israel*, p. 25.

[3] *E.Bi.*, col. 1335.

[4] *Religion of Israel to the Exile*, pp. 64 f.

[5] *Gesch. der Isr. Religion*, p. 24.

[6] *Religion of Israel*, pp. 227 ff.

[7] Article "Religion of Israel" in *H.D.B.*, vol. v.

[8] *Gesch. der A.T. Religion*, ed. 1, pp. 65–75.

[9] "Alter und Verbreitung des Heroenkultus wird dadurch belegt, dass er uns noch jetzt in Palästina bei Juden, Christen, und Mohammedanern begegnet." *Biblische Theol. des A.T.*, § 51.

[10] "Als ob der Heiligenkult, der in einem Teile des Christenheit jetzt geübt wird, etwas für das urchristliche Alter dieses Kults beweisen könnte!" König: *Gesch. der A.T. Religion*, ed. 1, p. 75.

Since the view of Stade with regard not only to saint-worship but to other features also of the existing belief and practice in modern Palestine, has been adopted in the foregoing pages, Kŏnig's criticism ought not to be passed over without discussion. We may grant his contention that we ought not to say that, because we find to-day the worship of saints among people nominally Christian, therefore saint-worship was part of the religion of the first Christian teachers. Yet we may fairly argue that a practice which is not derivable from the teaching of Christ, and nevertheless is not a modern invention, came into Christianity from its early environment, and therefore something akin to saint-worship existed among the people converted to Christ in the early centuries of our era. Saints to-day among the ignorant have the character of minor local deities. We might argue, therefore, that Christianity in the early centuries was propagated among people who were devoted to the service of local gods; that the new religion did not entirely displace the old; and that the saint who is worshipped to-day is in many cases the old god thinly disguised.

Thus from the present worship of saints in Italy (let us say) we may infer the worship of local deities among the Italians to whom Christianity was preached in the early centuries. This is a verifiable inference.

So from the present worship of dead saints and heroes in Palestine we may infer a similar worship in ancient Israel, not in the "legitimate religion" (to use König's term), but in that congeries of popular beliefs and practices which made up Israel's "Volksreligion." Such worship, moreover, must have been firmly established, seeing that it has successfully resisted the steady opposition of "legitimate religion."

What, then, are the facts which give support to this inference from modern Palestinian life?

The longing of the Israelite of all ages for a son to survive him and to keep his name in memory needs no proving. It may be explained, of course, as a natural human instinct, and a wish for the perpetuation of the family name; but it is, at least, not impossible that it

is a craving for one who should pay the customary tribute of worship to the departed.

The still extant custom of the recital of the Kaddish by modern Jews may enshrine a lingering recollection of distant days, when the son not only called to remembrance his dead father but worshipped him.[1] To-day, when the father or mother dies, the surviving sons recite the Kaddish twice daily, morning and evening, throughout the year of mourning, and then also on each recurring anniversary of the day of death.

A Jewish novelist of the last century [2] beautifully describes the significance of the Kaddish: "To know that when thou diest, the earth falling on thy head will not cover thee entirely; to know that there remain behind those who, wherever they may be on this wide earth, whether they may be poor or rich, will send this prayer after thee; to know that thou leavest them no house, no estate, no field, by which they must remember thee, and that yet they will cherish thy memory as their dearest inheritance. What more sanctifying knowledge canst thou ever hope for? And such is the knowledge bequeathed to us all by the Kaddish."

Is it wrong to see in this pious custom a transmutation within the sphere of strict monotheism of that worship of dead ancestors which was once a chief part of filial duty?

To provide honourable burial for the dead was ever a sacred obligation upon the son, and it was an act of piety for the Jew to bury the friendless dead.[3]

A pathetic instance of the longing of the Israelite for a son to pay the honours due to the dead occurs in the story of Absalom. "Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself the pillar, which is in the king's vale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." [4] The pillar is a *maṣṣeba*, such as stood regularly by the altar, and the word translated "to keep

[1] Cf. Lods, *op. cit.*, ii. 128. [2] Leopold Kompert (1822–1866).
[3] Cf. Tobit ii. 3–9.
[4] 2 Sam. xviii. 18. The LXX variants make it possible that in the earliest account it was David who erected the pillar. But this would not affect our use of the passage.

in remembrance" (הַזְכִּיר) has in some places a liturgical meaning.[1] The thought is that the sight of the *maṣṣeba* might move charitable people to give to the childless Absalom some portion of the honour for which the departed crave.[2]

Where no son survived, the Levirate marriage provided one by what we might call a legal fiction, though no unreality would be felt in ancient Israel. The widow of a childless man married her husband's brother, and the first son born to them was counted as belonging to the dead. More than one motive may be discerned for this custom. In *Deuteronomy* xxv. 5–10 the object of the Levirate marriage is to secure the remembrance of the dead brother's name in Israel, and the ancient story in *Genesis* xxxviii is in agreement with this. The Holiness Code forbade the Levirate marriage;[3] but the story of Ruth and the instance alleged by the Sadducees in their dispute with Jesus[4] show that it continued in spite of the prohibition. We can account for its persistence, if its purpose, or part of its purpose, was to secure even for the childless man his due remembrance in the worship of his posterity.[5]

The custom of marking a grave by a *maṣṣeba* is illustrated by *Genesis* xxxv. 20. The narrator (probably E) explains that the Pillar of Rachel's Grave[6] which existed in his day was so called because it was set up by Jacob at his wife's grave. Now Rachel was the ancestress of the tribes of Joseph and Benjamin, and Jeremiah[7] hears her lament in Ramah over the captivity of her sons. The prophet's beautiful lines are poetic, but the imagery of poetry finds its material in current beliefs, and we may discern here the thought of the spirit of the dead ancestress still haunting the tomb, and still concerned with the welfare of her posterity, the tribes that dwelt around it.

The frequent mention of tombs in the Old Testament is explained, if the tomb was in some sense a sanctuary.

[1] Cf. Isa. lxii. 6; xxvi. 13; xlix. 1; Exod. xxiii. 13; Amos vi. 10; Ps. xx. 7 (8); Josh. xxiii. 7, etc.
[2] Cf. Lods, *op. cit.*, i. 200–202.
[3] Lev. xviii. 16.
[4] Matt. xxii. 25.
[5] Cf. Lods, *op. cit.*, ii. 71 ff.
[6] מַצֶּבֶת קְבֻרַת רָחֵל.
[7] Jer. xxxi. 15.

Indeed, the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham and Sarah were buried, has remained a sanctuary to this day.[1]

Jacob and Joseph gave instructions that their bones were to be carried back to Canaan to be laid in the family sepulchres. Had they remained in Egypt they would have lacked the veneration due from posterity.

Again, the burial place of Joshua and of each of the Judges is mentioned. In the case of the minor Judges almost the only facts known are their burial places and the number of their children.[2]

The curious custom of burying a man in his own house [3] may be explained by numerous ethnographical parallels as due to the wish to have the spirit of the venerated ancestor as the guardian of the home.

This idea that the spirits of the dead dwell in, or near, their tomb, or else that they resort there and may be worshipped there, explains the protest of Ezekiel against the burial of the kings of Judah hard by the Temple.[4] The prophet's scornful anger is aroused by the insult to the jealousy of Yahwe, who would not tolerate in his presence the worship of any other. The prophet's demand that the people should " put away their whoredom and the carcases of their kings " vouches for the fact of such worship in pre-Exilic days.

The references to the " burnings for the kings of Israel " [5] are witness to the same cult of dead monarchs. The " burnings " were not the cremation of the bodies of the kings—a practice abhorrent to the mind of Israel [6]—but the burning of quantities of spices and perfumes in honour of the dead. The offering was omitted, it may be noticed, in the case of Jehoram, who was remembered as an evil king.[7]

In modern Palestine, and indeed wherever saint-worship

[1] Jaussen : *Coutumes des Arabes*, p. 308. Cf. Lods, *op. cit.*, i. 198–204.
[2] Judg. xii. 8–15.
[3] 1 Sam. xxv. 1 ; 1 Kings ii. 34. Cf. *E.R.E.*, article, " Death and Disposal of the Dead," and Lods, *op. cit.*, i. 193 f.
[4] Ezek. xliii. 7–9.
[5] Jer. xxxiv. 5 ; 2 Chron. xvi. 14 xxi. 19. [6] Cf. Amos ii. 1.
[7] 2 Chron. xxi. 19.

prevails, miracles are wrought at the sacred tombs. We have one clear instance in the Old Testament, when we read that a dead man revived on being cast into the tomb of Elisha.[1] The wonder-working spirit of the prophet surely received due tribute of grateful worship!

The extreme degree of uncleanness attaching to a corpse and the banishment of all who were unclean through contact with the dead from the service and sanctuary of Yahwe [2] may rest upon a belief in the demonic power of the spirits of the dead. Here, as elsewhere, that is unclean before Yahwe which is felt, however vaguely, to belong to other gods.[3]

In *Numbers* xix and *Deuteronomy* xxi. 1–9 there is described a sacrifice whose anomalous character proves that it maintained its position in the Law, because it could not be eradicated.[4] It is the only sacrifice which is to be offered away from the central sanctuary. In the Deuteronomic law, which seems more primitive, when a man is found in the field, slain by an unknown hand, the elders of the nearest city are to take an heifer into a valley with running water, and there break its neck. Then, washing their hands in the running water over the body of the heifer, they are to say: "Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it." According to *Numbers* xix, the colour of the cow is to be red. The choice of this colour and the kind of ritual recall parallels in other religions in the case of offerings to the dead. The sacrifice of the cow is an offering intended to propitiate the vengeful spirit of the murdered man. That the whole rite as described in *Leviticus* involved uncleanness in those concerned in it implies that they had been in contact with "holy" powers.

The yearly sacrifice of David's family at Bethlehem [5] probably takes us back (as Marti [6] says) to a former worship of the common ancestor. König [7] remarks that our document does not say so, neither is this explanation consistent with the parallels.

[1] 2 Kings xiii. 21.
[2] See Num. xix; Lev. xxi. 10–13.
[3] Cf. Lods, *op. cit.*, i. 176 ff.
[4] See Lods, *op. cit.* i. 169.
[5] 1 Sam. xx. 6.
[6] *Gesch. der Isr. Religion*, § 29.
[7] *Op. cit.*, p. 66.

Of course, there is no express mention of the worship of the common ancestor; the editor of 1 *Samuel* would see to that. But the parallels referred to by König (the yearly sacrifices of Elkanah at Shiloh[1]) are not true parallels. Elkanah's yearly sacrifices are offered away from home at Yahwe's sanctuary, and therefore necessarily offered to Yahwe. But David's family assemble for the yearly sacrifice at the ancestral home, where the graves of the forefathers would be.[2] The facts at least suggest that they assembled to worship their common ancestors. More than this we do not claim, and more than this suggestion we could not expect to find.[3]

Have we another hint in so late a book as *Ecclesiasticus*?[4] "Neither was there a man born like unto Joseph, a governor of his brethren, a stay of the people: *yea, his bones were visited.*"

The prohibition of heathen mourning customs[5] is not intended merely to restrain excessive expressions of grief. They are prohibited because Israel is "an holy people unto Yahwe."[6] They provoke his jealousy because they are survivals of acts of sacrifice, the hair and the blood being offered to heathen deities or to deified ancestors, when the mourners shaved themselves or made cuttings in their flesh.

Nevertheless, these mourning rites continued to be observed as late as the time of Jeremiah,[7] who mentions them along with the funeral feast, apparently without censure. For him, probably, they had become no more than expressions of grief, but Hosea still felt that they involved the pollutions of heathenism. In foretelling the cessation of libation and offering to Yahwe when sinful Israel is carried away captive, he declares: "Their bread shall be as the bread of mourners: all that eat thereof shall be polluted."[8]

H. P. Smith sees a reference to these funeral feasts even in the Psalter: "They joined themselves unto Ba'al

[1] 1 Sam. i. 3 ff.
[2] Cf. Ruth ii. 4;
[3] Cf. Lods, *op. cit.*, ii. 32, 121.
[4] xlix. 15.
[5] Deut. xiv. 1; Lev. xix. 27 f., xxi. 1–6.
[6] Deut. xiv. 2.
[7] Jer. xvi. 6, 7.
[8] Hos. ix. 4. Read with Nowack כלחם אונים לַחְמָם. Cf. R.V. marg.

Peor, and ate the offerings of the dead." [1] It would seem, however, that in this place "the dead" more probably denote the powerless heathen gods to whom Israel fell away.[2]

Less doubtful is the reference to a funeral feast or a sacrifice to the dead in *Deuteronomy*. The faithful Israelite is required to declare that he has not given away any part of the tithe of his increase "for the dead." [3] The desire of the legislator was evidently to separate everything connected with Yahwe from contact with the dead, i.e. from the worship of other gods.[4]

These references to mourning customs as provoking the jealousy of Yahwe suggest, therefore, the survival in Israel of a cult of dead ancestors.

Necromancy, the practice of consulting the dead for information unattainable by natural means, is not in itself a proof of ancestor-worship. It flourishes in spiritualist circles in modern England, where the actual cult of the departed would be unlikely. Still, necromancy occurs elsewhere in close connection with ancestor-worship, and the undoubted prevalence of the one in Israel raises the presumption of the existence of the other. The legal codes condemn necromancy along with other practices of an occult nature.[5] King Manasseh "dealt with necromancers," [6] while Josiah in his reforming zeal sought to banish them from his dominions.[7]

The necromancer is designated in Hebrew by the word *'ob*,[8] the derivation of which is quite uncertain. Briggs, in *B.D.B.*, p. 15 *a*, holds that in all cases *'ob* may be rendered by "necromancer" or "necromancy," but in the expression *ba'alath 'ob* [9] it seems to be more natural to follow Robertson Smith [10] and the majority of modern scholars, and to render "a woman possessed of, or by, a spirit." The *'ob*, that is, is the *revenant* who imparts to the necromancer her supernatural knowledge. If this meaning is required

[1] Ps. cvi. 28.
[2] See H. P. Smith: *Religion of Israel*, p. 33 *n*.
[3] Deut. xxvi. 14. [4] Cf. Lods, *op. cit.*, i. 182.
[5] Deut. xviii. 11; Lev. xx. 27 (H), xix. 31, xx. 6; Exod. xxii. 18 (?).
[6] 2 Kings xxi. 6 = 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6.
[7] 2 Kings xxiii. 24. [8] אוֹב. [9] בַּעֲלַת־אוֹב.
[10] *J. Ph.*, xiv. 127 f. See 1 Sam. xxviii. 7.

in this passage, then the ordinary rendering of *'ob* in the R.V. as "one that has a familiar spirit" will be justified. In any case the contexts in which the word occurs indicate plainly enough commerce with the spirits of the dead.

Two of the passages in question do more: they point to a belief in the superhuman, nay, the divine character of the *revenants*. The first of these passages is 1 *Samuel* xxviii. 3–25.

When Saul sought the necromancer at En-dor, and bade her call up Samuel, the woman thus describes the dimly appearing form: "I see *'ĕlōhîm* coming up out of the earth." The R.V. translates: "I see a god"[1]; but Kautzsch[2] minimizes the force of the term, saying that "the most that can be inferred is that the spirits of the dead were one and all included under the category of *'ĕlōhîm* or *bĕnê 'ĕlōhîm*." Even so, this is enough to show that in popular thought the spirits of the dead were placed on the further side of the line which divides the human from the divine.

König argues[3] that *'ĕlōhîm* may here mean no more than "ruler" (Herrscher), and compares *Psalm* lxxxii. 6. The comparison may, however, point to a conclusion opposed to that drawn by König, if the words of the Psalm ("I said, Ye are gods—*'ĕlōhîm*") are taken as addressed to the heathen gods, who are regarded as the rulers of the nations, while Israel's God is Yahwe. Such a conception was familiar to Hebrew thought.[4]

After full weight has been given to the arguments of Kautzsch and König, it seems still to be possible to adduce 1 *Samuel* xxviii. 13 as evidence of a cultus of the dead in ancient Israel, which long persisted in spite of the disapproval of official religion.[5]

The other passage is *Isaiah* viii. 19, the exegesis of which is, unfortunately, not certain. The verse may be rendered: "And when they [the opponents of the prophet] shall say unto you [the prophet's hearers], Seek unto the necromancers and unto the wizards, that chirp and that

[1] 1 Sam. xxviii. 13.
[2] *H.D.B.*, v. 615*b*.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 69.
[4] Cf. Isa. xxiv. 21 f.; Dan. x. 13, 20 f.
[5] Cf. Lods, *op. cit.*, i. 245.

mutter: should not a people seek unto their *'ĕlōhîm*, on behalf of the living unto the dead? To the teaching and the testimony!" [1]

The R.V. makes the opponents' words end at "mutter"; and the prophet then asks: "Should not a people seek unto their God (i.e. Yahwe)?" Not waiting for an answer, he exclaims indignantly: "On behalf of the living *should they seek* unto the dead!" This meaning is, however, obtained only by a violent change of construction, and by supplying the words in italic.

It is, surely, easier to regard all the words from "Seek" to "unto the dead" as spoken by the opponents. Then the prophet breaks in with the passionate battle-cry: "To the teaching (*tôrâ*) and the testimony!" If this is the right assignment of the words, then in the utterance of the opponents there are three parallel and synonymous phrases: *Seek unto the necromancers* [or "familiar spirits" —*'ôbôth*], *unto the* 'elohim, *unto the dead*. The spirits of the dead are, therefore, here described as *'ĕlōhîm*—gods. This interpretation of the verse commends itself, and conforms to that already given of 1 *Samuel* xxviii. 13.

These are the only instances in which the term *'ĕlōhîm* is directly applied to the departed, but that any instance at all should have escaped the hand of redactors, to whom such an application would be intensely repugnant, causes us to suspect that the usage was current and frequent among the people.

That the *tĕrāphîm* had some connexion with ancestor-worship is the view of many scholars.[2] It appears from *Genesis* xxxi. 30 and 32 that they were idols of some sort, since Laban describes them as his *'ĕlōhîm*. They probably had some resemblance to the human form, so that it was possible for Saul's servants to mistake one laid in a bed for the sick David.[3]

Until the reformation of Josiah they were regarded as harmless. David possesses one, and Hosea [4] mentions them as part of the ordinary accompaniments of worship.

[1] Cf. Lods, *op. cit.*, i. 258, and references there.
[2] See Burney: *Judges*, p. 421, and references there; and Lods, *op. cit.*, i. 231–6.
[3] 1 Sam. xix. 13. [4] Hos. iii. 4.

They were used in divination, as we learn from Ezekiel [1] and "Zechariah," [2] and their mention in the latter passage points to their continued use perhaps as late as the Maccabean period.

> But Kennett in Peake's *Commentary* suggests that at this date the word may have been used for idols generally without specific meaning.[3]

In 2 *Kings* xxiii. 24 they are associated with familiar spirits and wizards, and this suggests their use in necromancy. This use becomes probable, if the name *tĕrāphîm* [4] is connected etymologically with *rĕphāîm*,[5] both being derived from a root which means "to sink." The *rĕphāîm* are the "ghosts" or "shades" of the dead.[6] The *tĕrāphîm* will then represent those who have sunk down into the underworld.

Their occurrence as the property of individuals suggests that they were household gods, and, indeed, representations of the forefathers of the family.

What conclusions can be drawn from the evidence which has been reviewed in the last few pages? [7]

Descriptions given by travellers of the customs of modern Palestinian peasants and comparison with other religions in their animistic stage have created an antecedent probability that we should discover in ancient Israel belief in the survival of the human spirit after death, and in the supernatural power and knowledge of these spirits, and, further, that we should discover signs of the cult of the dead, particularly in the form of the worship of ancestors.

It is certain that belief in the survival of the dead was general. If Old Testament writers say little about the condition of the departed, the explanation may be that they had no wish to encourage speculations which might divert the people from the exclusive service and worship of Yahwe.

[1] Ezek. xxi. 21, 22 (26, 27 H).
[2] Zech. x. 2.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 580.
[4] תְּרָפִים.
[5] רְפָאִים.
[6] Job xxvi. 5; Isa. xiv. 9, xxvi. 14–19; Ps. lxxxviii. 11; Prov. ii. 18, ix. 18, xxi. 16.
[7] Pp. 66–75.

There are not a few Christian teachers to-day who adopt a like attitude in face of the alleged revelations of modern spiritualism.

It is highly probable that the multitude in Israel credited the departed, or some of them, with supernatural power and knowledge, and that they sometimes spoke of them as *'ĕlōhîm*—gods.

It is highly probable, again, that a religious veneration was paid to them, since tombs were cherished and *maṣṣe-both* erected near them, while funeral offerings and feasts were part of the common custom.

The negative evidence of the legal codes, which shows that all that appertained to the dead was "unclean" to Yahwe as being sacred to alien powers, and also that the necromancer was condemned as being the priest of a religion Yahwe would not tolerate, increases this probability.

The worship of ancestors in particular is probable, but not in so high a degree. To it point the holding of the yearly family feast, the practice of burying the dead within the house, and the possession of household gods.

Finally, the Israelite's intense desire for offspring and for burial in the family sepulchres is a general confirmation of the evidence accumulated under all these heads.

SUMMARY.

Animism leads to the worship of animals. Evidence of this is found in 3 *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Leviticus* (H), *Kings*, and J. Animals were regarded as clean, i.e. sacred to Yahwe, or as unclean, i.e. sacred to alien gods. In primitive times the sacred animal was looked upon as an embodiment of the divine life. This belief is characteristic of totemism. The ancestors of Israel passed through a totemistic stage, though there are but few traces of totemism in the Old Testament. Animism leads also to worship of the spirits of the dead, especially of dead ancestors. The worship of the spirits of the dead exists in modern Palestine, and may be inferred for ancient Israel. Numerous facts support this view, e.g. the intense desire of the Israelite for a son to succeed him, the careful provision for burial, the honour paid to tombs, the "burnings" for the kings of Israel. The uncleanness of the corpse points to its association with a divine power other than Yahwe. In *Numbers* xix. and *Deuteronomy* xxi. 1–9 there is described an archaic survival of an offering to propitiate the spirit of a murdered man. The family

festival is connected with the worship of the common ancestor. Mourning customs are prohibited in the Old Testament as provoking the jealousy of Yahwe, i.e. because they are rites paid to other gods. Nevertheless, these customs continued at least as late as Jeremiah. Necromancy is frequently referred to in the Old Testament. Though not a proof of the worship of the dead, it is found elsewhere in connexion with it. In 1 *Samuel* xxviii. 13 and *Isaiah* viii. 19 the departed spirit is called *'elohim*—a god. The teraphim were images of ancestors, and were used as household gods. Evidence of their use in Israel is found at different periods, e.g. in "*Zechariah*," *Ezekiel*, 2 *Kings*, and JE. The conclusion to be drawn from the evidence is that the worship of ancestors probably existed in Israel in the historic period.

## CHAPTER III

# THE WORSHIP OF THE HEAVENLY BODIES (ASTRAL WORSHIP)

In view of the unquestionable worship of what we should call the minor powers of nature, we cannot fail to ask whether in Israel divine attributes were assigned to those sublime objects which we most readily associate with nature gods, namely sun, moon, and stars.

To us, perhaps, it seems a little less unreasonable to regard as a god the sun whose rays illumine the whole earth than to find divinity in stones and trees. But the thoughts of the ancient Israelite were not as our thoughts, and he seems to have turned his mind more readily to the power that was at hand, and therefore able to be touched by his appeal, than to powers which, if greater, were more remote and less likely to respond to the approach of any particular group of worshippers. Be this as it may, signs of astral worship are few in the earlier periods of Israelite history, and do not become unmistakable until the time is reached when the nation is in close contact with foreign empires.

Sinai and the Desert of Sin, regions famous in the early history of the Hebrews, bear witness by their names to the cult of the moon-god Sin, who was zealously worshipped in the most ancient times in Syria, Babylonia, and Southern Arabia. Greek and Latin writers testify to the continuance of the cult in Arabia Petræa, and Doughty [1] tells us that the appearance of the new moon is still greeted by the Bedouin. But it would be unsafe to argue from these facts alone that Israel practised the cult.[2]

[1] *Arabia Deserta*, i. 366.
[2] Cf. G. F. Moore in *E.Bl.*, col. 3355.

More important is the fact that the day of the new moon [1] and, in a lesser degree, that of the full moon [2] were festivals in the calendar of Israel, celebrated with religious rejoicings and sacrifices. The Sabbath also, which is often mentioned in connexion with the new moon,[3] may have a lunar origin, the week corresponding to each of the four quarters of the moon.

One indubitable reference to the worship of the moon [and sun] is found in *Job* xxxi. 26–28, where the writer alludes to the superstitious custom of throwing kisses to the sun and moon. This custom would correspond to the actual kissing of an idol.[4] The passage is, however, post-Exilic and poetic, and we cannot be sure whether it is a deliberate archaism or a reference to contemporary heathenism within or without Israel.

In the very ancient Song of Deborah [5] we read, indeed, that "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera," but the words are hardly more than a poetic hyperbole, and seemingly so understood by the writer of the prose parallel,[6] if we may assume that he based his narrative on the poem. It would be unsafe, therefore, to draw any doctrinal inference from the words of the Song.

From *Amos* v. 25 f. also no conclusion can be reached. Text and interpretation alike are uncertain,[7] and even if the reference were to star-worship (which is disputed), the prophet does not necessarily carry back that worship to earlier times than his own.

There is evidence of sun-worship among the Canaanites. The place name Beth-Shemesh [8] (House of the Sun) may preserve the tradition of an ancient temple of the Sun-god there. Moreover, Beth-Shemesh is in the region to which the exploits of Samson are assigned, and this fact favours the view that the story of the hero contains elements which are derived from solar myths. His name—

[1] 1 Sam. xx. 5; 2 Kings iv. 23; Amos viii. 5; Isa. i. 14.
[2] Ps. lxxxi. 3.
[3] E.g. 2 Kings iv. 23; Amos viii. 5.
[4] 1 Kings xix. 18; Hos. xiii. 2.
[5] Judg. v. 20.
[6] Judg. iv.
[7] See Harper: *I.C.C.*, pp. 137 f.
[8] Josh. xv. 10; 1 Sam. vi. 9, etc.

*Shimshon* [1]—is a derivative from *Shemesh* [2] (Sun), and comparison may fairly be made between some of his exploits and those of the Babylonian hero, Gilgamesh. The fact that Gilgamesh is a solar hero may be taken as proved, and accordingly it is highly probable, as many scholars now hold, that Samson also has incorporated into his legend certain solar elements.

Burney [3] makes the further suggestion that in the name of Samson's tribe, Dan, there is an ancient title of the Sun-god as the divine Judge.[4] He holds that Dan was settled in Canaan before the coming of the Joseph tribes under Joshua, and was incorporated later into Israel. "If, then, we may assume that the ancient patron-deity of the tribe of Dan was the Sun-god under his aspect of divine Judge, we shall not be surprised if we find relics of solar mythology surviving in a euhemerized form among the folk-traditions of the tribe." [5]

There appears, however, to be no ground for supposing that the narrator of the story in *Judges* (probably J) had any consciousness of a solar myth as part of the sources of his story. It is, however, worthy of note that the later northern home of the tribe of Dan is a district where sun-worship has prevailed from time immemorial, and where to-day many ruins of sun-temples still remain.[6]

It is not until we are within the Assyrian period that clear evidence of the worship of the heavenly bodies appears, and then it is first as a fashionable cult under royal patronage rather than as a popular form of devotion.

Assyrian influence became predominant in Judah during the reign of Ahaz, and soon began to affect the outward forms of religion,[7] but it was not until Manasseh came to the throne that the astral worship of Assyria and Babylonia was introduced into Jerusalem. Then, however, it came in full flood. The book of *Kings* records that Manasseh "worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them," [8]

[1] שִׁמְשׁוֹן. [2] שֶׁמֶשׁ.
[3] See Burney: *Judges*, pp. 391 ff., and the literature quoted there.
[4] Deriving Dan (דָּן) from the root *din* (√ דִּין), to judge.
[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 392. [6] Curtiss, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
[7] 2 Kings xvi. 10. [8] 2 Kings xxi. 3.

and even that "he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of Yahwe." [1] This testimony of the historian is confirmed by the prophet [2] and the law-giver.[3]

Stade [4] raises the question how the relation of Yahwe to the Assyrian deities was conceived, and Budde,[5] in opposition to Stade, concludes that Yahwe was believed to be suzerain over them.

It may seem strange to suppose, as Budde does, that while Judah was subject to Assyria, Judah's God should have been exalted as supreme over the gods of the seemingly all-powerful empire. It must be remembered, however, that Judah's national pride had been greatly intensified by the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib. Yahwe then had intervened to defend his city and his house, and had smitten the Assyrian army. He could do so again, if he willed. Therefore Manasseh could grant a place in Yahwe's temple for the worship of the host of heaven—a place of honour, but yet a subordinate one. In this way Manasseh acknowledged his political allegiance, and at the same time the superstitious among his people could make friends with the gods of Assyria without hurt to national pride.

No doubt the prophets regarded Manasseh's innovation in a far different light, but it is probable that the people in general accepted the king's point of view. It was polytheistic, indeed, but it exalted Yahwe above the Assyrian pantheon.

Under Josiah the prophetic party triumphed at court, and the astral-worship in the Temple was suppressed.[6] But it retained its hold upon the people, and after Jerusalem had fallen in 586 B.C. they, or some of them, attributed its overthrow to the cessation of the worship of the Queen of Heaven.[7]

The Queen of Heaven was probably the Assyro-Babylonian goddess Ishtar, who was identified with the planet Venus. St. Isaac of Antioch (died *circa* A.D. 460)

[1] 2 Kings xxi. 5.
[2] Jer. viii. 2, xix. 13.
[3] Deut. iv. 19, xvii. 2–5.
[4] *G.V.I.*, i. p. 629.
[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 167.
[6] 2 Kings xxiii. 5.
[7] Cf. Jer. xliv. 17.

speaks of the worship of Venus from the roofs of houses by Syrian women in his own day.[1]

Ezekiel mentions the worship of the sun among the idolatrous rites practised in the Temple in Zedekiah's reign,[2] and its association with the "weeping for Tammuz" —an undoubtedly Babylonian rite, and closely connected with the cult of Ishtar—is another sign of the foreign origin of this worship at Jerusalem.

We regard, therefore, the worship of the heavenly bodies as having no important place in the popular and traditional religion of Israel during historical times,[3] though the new moon and Sabbath festivals suggest the survival of some astral ideas. The prevalence of this worship during the last days of the Judæan kingdom was due to the influence of the court. It retained a hold on the people in dark days of distress, when faith in Yahwe failed, and help was sought from other gods whose power had not been involved in so signal an overthrow as was Yahwe's, when his own city was destroyed and his house defiled by strangers.

SUMMARY.

There are few signs of the worship of the heavenly bodies in the earlier period of Israel's history. *Judges* v. 20 and *Amos* v. 25 f. should not be quoted. The Sabbath and the new-moon festivals may, however, have had a lunar origin. The legend of Samson contains elements which are derived from solar myths, and the place-name Beth-Shemesh testifies to the early worship of the sun in Canaan. Clear evidence of astral-worship appears in the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh. The latter "worshipped all the host of heaven." Josiah suppressed this worship, but it retained its hold upon the people even after the fall of Jerusalem. But astral-worship had no important place in the traditional religion of Israel.

[1] Cf. *H.D.B.*, iv. 181.
[2] Ezek. viii. 16.
[3] Cf. Gunkel: *Gottesbegriff in A.T.*

## CHAPTER IV

# THE METHOD OF WORSHIP—SACRIFICE

The institution of sacrifice holds so important a place in the religious life of Israel from the earliest times to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 that it should throw much light upon the idea of God.

Ought it, however, to be treated here as part of that popular religion which has survived in the superstitious customs of modern Palestine and Syria, and not rather as part of the "legitimate" religion which we find in its full development in the time of Jesus? It must, indeed, be considered in both places, but in this most certainly, for sacrifice was a primary institution among all the Semitic peoples before the formation of the nation of Israel or the promulgation of the earliest Mosaic legislation; and it has held its place to this day among the people. On the other hand the legal religion dispensed with sacrifice during one of its most vigorous constructive periods—the Exile—and Judaism, the heir to Pharisaic legalism, has lived and prospered for well-nigh nineteen centuries without the sacrifices of the Law.

We have, therefore, to consider sacrifice as an institution inherited by Israel from its Semitic origins, apart from the modifications introduced into it by the legal codes.

Frequent reference has been made, indeed, to sacrifice already. It has been shown that the offering of sacrifice at local sanctuaries indicated a belief in a plurality of gods, and that sacrifices in connexion with funeral feasts were among the tokens of ancestor-worship and the cult of the dead; but here we have to consider the significance of sacrifice in itself.

All the rituals of primitive peoples have their centre in sacrifice, which seems to find a natural place in the animistic scheme of thought. "As prayer is a request made to a deity as if he were a man, so sacrifice is a gift made to a deity as if he were a man." [1] It is a gift (*minḥa*) [2] which is brought by an inferior to a superior, in order that the superior may be favourably disposed to the giver. This is the simplest form of the Gift Theory of sacrifice.

F. B. Jevons [3] severely criticizes this theory, and declares that according to it "there was no religion in the earliest manifestation of religion." But his own description of the purpose of the offerer does not seem to be essentially different: "Thus man approaches, bearing with him something intended to please the god that he draws near." [4]

Surely we should call that "something" a gift. The offerer may be acting on the principle "*do ut des*," and yet it would be hard to describe the transaction as "commercialized" or non-religious. He does not calculate: a sacrifice of such and such value and so much advantage in return. He believes that his god is generous, and that his gift is small in comparison with what he himself receives; but he gives, hoping that he may receive more than he deserves.

In most elementary schools we may see in summer the teacher's desk decorated with flowers, the children's gift. The teacher knows they are a token of affection, otherwise she would not accept them; but is she unaware that they embody also the principle "*do ut des*"?

So, according to the Gift Theory, the sacrifice is at once a tribute of gratitude and affection, and an appeal for favour. If this theory is true, sacrifice would not be without true religion, although that religion would not be completely ethical, and its conception of God would be anthropomorphic.

The Gift Theory is clearly implied in the language of the Old Testament. The word *minḥa* (gift, tribute, offering) occurs one hundred and fifty-three times, and in

[1] Tylor: *Primitive Culture*, ii. 375.
[2] מִנְחָה.
[3] *The Idea of God in Early Religions*, pp. 68–71.
[4] *Loc. cit.*

more than a hundred instances it is applied to a sacrificial offering made to God. In other instances it means a present given to a man or a tribute paid to a sovereign.[1] In all cases the idea of giving is essential. Now, the first sacrifice in the Old Testament is recorded in the primitive document J.[2] Cain and Abel both bring a *minḥa*—a gift. God regards Abel's gift with favour, but not Cain's. The reason seems to be that the material of Abel's sacrifice, a shepherd's gift, was acceptable, but Cain's gift, the husbandman's, was not. Anyhow, God does not disdain a gift of the right kind duly offered. The J document clearly retains the notion that Yahwe is a Being who is pleased with a gift, and the notion, though childish and anthropomorphic, has some religious value. It remained in the consciousness of Israel throughout its history.

But a sacrifice, if it is a gift, is more than a gift. Not every kind of material is used for offerings to Yahwe. Almost all the Old Testament offerings are in the form of food, nearly always a clean animal, and they have the usual accompaniments of a meal—salt, oil, wine.

It should be observed that in modern Palestine the material is the same, and the feast which follows the sacrifice is regarded as one at which the *welī* is host. The man who brings the offering says: "This feast does not belong to us, it belongs to the saint. . . . This feast is given at his expense."[3] Here we have both the rite and its rationale.

Robertson Smith and Wellhausen hold that the primary significance of sacrifice is to be found in the sacred meal. According to the former the sacrifice was a sacred meal at which an animal was devoured, which was akin both to the god and his worshippers. "The actual life of the sacred and kindred animal . . . is actually distributed among all the participants, each of whom incorporates a particle of it with his own individual life."[4] "Among the Arabs the idea is universal that in the sacrifices a

[1] See *B.D.B.*, מִנְחָה.
[2] Gen. iv. 3–5.
[3] Curtiss, *op. cit.*, pp. 172 f.
[4] *Religion of the Semites*, ed. 2, p. 313.

bond or covenant of brotherhood is made with the deity." [1]

The special form of Robertson Smith's theory depends on its association with totemistic modes of thought, the survival of which in Israel is doubtful. In the more general form of the theory, as expressed, e.g., by Wellhausen above, the sacrifice knits the god and the worshippers together by the bonds created by the interchange of hospitality. This has been called the Table Bond Theory.[2]

König maintains [3] that sacrifice is simply a tribute, and is not a sacramental communion with the deity, and that the phrase " to eat before Yahwe " is not the equivalent of " to sacrifice," for the sacred meal is only an accessory, not an essential part of the rite.

Jevons's view seems to be similar, since he says : " The sacrificial meal, then, is not a means by which reconciliation is effected, but the outward expression of the conviction that the end has been attained." [4] The meal, that is, is secondary, an accessory.

This latter view hardly serves to explain the ritual of the older and more popular forms of sacrifice in Israel. One of the most primitive records of sacrifice is contained in 1 *Samuel* xiv. 32–35. Here we are told that Saul's victorious soldiers were slaying and eating the captured animals without previously offering the blood to Yahwe. Saul rolls up a great stone for an altar, by which the animals are to be slain, and the blood poured out : " the same was the first altar that he built unto Yahwe." [5] The sacrifice appears plainly as a common meal in which the flesh is consumed by the worshippers, while the blood was the portion of the deity. In eating with the blood the people had defrauded [6] Yahwe of the share due to him.

The feast to which Samuel invited Saul is another example of a primitive sacrifice. Saul and his servant are told : " As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall

[1] " Durchgehender ist bei den arabischen Opfern die Idee der Verbrüderung oder der Bundschliessung mit der Gottheit. Diese Idee liegt dem Opfermahl zu grunde." *Reste arab. Heidentums*, ed. 2, p. 124.

[2] Cf. W. P. Paterson : article " Sacrifice " in *H.D.B.*, iv. 331.

[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 138–140 ; cf. p. 501.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 75.

[5] 1 Sam. xiv. 35.

[6] בִּגְדֹתָם.

straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat till he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that be bidden." [1] The eating here seems to be the essential feature of the sacrifice, and the most natural interpretation of the rite is that it is a communion feast, strengthening the bond between Yahwe and his worshippers.

This type of sacrifice was the common one in Israel throughout pre-Exilic times, and so long as sacrifice remained a popular institution. The name for such a sacrifice is *zebaḥ* [2]—(root *zabaḥ*, to slaughter)—with which *shelem* [3] is often used in apposition. The meaning of the latter term is in dispute. *B.D.B.* translate: "sacrifice for alliance or friendship, 'peace-offering.'" The word in this case would be derived from *shalem* [4] = "to be whole, or at one," and would fitly be applied to a feast of communion with the deity through joint participation in a common meal. Others derive from a cognate verbal form *shillem* [5] in the sense of requite, and regard the *shelem* as a thankoffering.

The second explanation agrees very well with the Gift Theory of sacrifice, but is less probable than the first, since the idea of a gift to the deity is more prominent in another form of offering—the *'ôlā* [6] or "burnt-offering." This is "that which goes up" (from the root *'ālā*),[7] and its special character is that it is wholly made over to the deity, no part being retained by the worshippers. It seems to be primitive equally with the peace-offering, with which it is indeed, more often than not, connected. It was offered at times of special solemnity or danger, e.g. at the beginning of a war, on the arrival of the ark from the Philistine country, or when Solomon approached Yahwe at Gibeon.[8]

We may, therefore, regard the burnt-offering as essentially a tribute, while the peace-offering is the means of communion.

[1] 1 Sam. ix. 13. [2] זָבַח √זבח. [3] שֶׁלֶם.
[4] שָׁלַם (Qal). [5] שִׁלֵּם (Piel). [6] עֹלָה.
[7] √עָלָה, "to go up."
[8] Judg. vi. 26; 1 Sam. vi. 14; 1 Kings iii. 4.

Human sacrifice is probably to be looked upon as an extreme form of the burnt-offering, the victim chosen being the most valuable possible. The gift is of the highest worth, and the act of renunciation on the part of the worshipper reaches its utmost limit. Human sacrifice was not unknown in Israel, though it was unusual during the earlier historic period.[1] Archæology has proved that among Israel's predecessors in Canaan it must have been common. Human remains in a building attest the "foundation-sacrifice," and examples of the burial in jars of infants of about a week old in the vicinity of a sanctuary point in all probability to the "sacrifice of the firstborn."

Burney,[2] who holds that "the Book of the Covenant[3] represents very largely the consuetudinary legislation of Canaan from a period long prior to the settlement under Joshua," thinks that the law of *Exodus* xxii. 29, "The firstborn of thy sons thou shalt give to me," originally referred to actual sacrifice, but that an animal substitute was usually provided from an early period of Israel's history. The story of the unaccomplished sacrifice of Isaac may be taken as an ætiological legend in this sense.[4] Probably the custom lived on in an underground way, emerging into publicity in times of national stress and religious degeneracy, as in the days of Ahaz, Manasseh, and Jehoiakim.[5]

The normal form of popular sacrifice was, however, undoubtedly the peace-offering which was eaten before Yahwe (or the Ba'alim) at the sacred feast. This was in keeping with the predominantly confident and joyous tone of pre-Exilic religion.

That the feast might easily become the chief element of the popular worship, and the thought of communion with God fall into the background, is attested by the denunciations of the eighth-century prophets.[6] The popular worship was rendered at the local sanctuaries,

[1] See the additional note in Burney's *Judges*, pp. 329–334.
[2] *Loc. cit.* [3] Exod. xx. 22–xxiii. 19. [4] Gen. xxii.
[5] See 2 Kings xvi. 3, xxi. 6; Micah vi. 7; Jer. vii. 31.
[6] Hos. iv. 13 f.; Amos ii. 7 f.

which Israel had in many cases taken over from the Canaanites. At these the Israelites adored the Ba'al, the lord and owner of the land, and giver of its increase.[1] This Ba'al might be identified with Yahwe, more or less completely, but the cultus was that of the Canaanite Ba'alim. The worship of these Semitic nature deities as patrons of fertility was always associated with practices which to us are loathsome immorality. In their origin they may have been innocent in intention, as judged by the moral consciousness of the time, but as society developed, and the family became its fundamental institution, they remained as a noxious survival from an earlier stage. In the eighth century religion still sheltered them, while morality condemned them. In spite of the prophets these practices were not entirely rooted out, and something like them exists in the Palestine of to-day.[2]

Two of the types of sacrifice met with in the Old Testament are not discussed at this point, viz. the sin-offering and the guilt-offering. They do not appear in pre-Exilic times, and though they have an important place in the post-Exilic ritual codes, it is unlikely that they ever counted for much in the religious life of the common people.

What, then, is the idea of God expressed in the sacrifices which have now been reviewed? It cannot be claimed that it is a lofty one, nor that it is by any means fully ethical.

To our mind the word "sacrifice" immediately recalls the thought of atonement for sin, but this is conspicuously absent from the ritual of the peace-offering and even of the burnt-offering. True, the sacrifice may be offered to turn away divine wrath, but the wrath is not provoked by anything that we should call sin. Indeed, we shall find that when the idea of God as righteous emerges into prominence in the teaching of the eighth-century prophets, it is seen to be incompatible with the offering of material sacrifice.

Yet the primitive sacrifices were not without religious and moral value. Pater has sketched beautifully in

[1] Hos. ii. 8. [2] Cf. Curtiss, *op. cit.*, pp. 149–154.

*Marius the Epicurean*[1] the kind of feelings with which an old Roman paid his devotion to the gods of field and garden. Something of the same feeling must have been present in the heart of the Israelite when he worshipped Yahwe as the Ba'al, the Giver of the corn and wine and oil.

If the Gift Theory explains in part the motive of the sacrifice, and if the Israelite said in his heart, *do ut des*, his idea of God was, indeed, anthropomorphic, and he measured the divine character by the moral stature of the great men he knew on earth. Yet he thought of God as the Giver of all good gifts, to whom he owed gratitude for the past, while he sought his future favour.

Again, if the Table-Bond Theory explains in part the motive of sacrifice, there is another element of no mean value. That God could be gratified by smelling the sweet savour of the burning victim[2] is an idea crudely anthropomorphic, it may be, and the blood ritual takes us into the region of primitive animism. Yet the idea that God, as kinsman and table-companion, condescended to enter into communion with his worshippers, was one that might conceivably have developed into the idea of a purely spiritual communion between God and man. It did not do so, and spiritual evolution proceeded on other lines than that of the cultus. Robertson Smith's last words in his *Religion of the Semites* give the reason why: "A ritual system must always remain materialistic, even if its materialism is disguised under the cloak of mysticism."

SUMMARY.

Sacrifice as the central fact in worship throws light upon the idea of God. It depends ultimately upon animistic notions. There are various theories as to the meaning of sacrifice, e.g. the Gift Theory, the Table-Bond Theory, and the Sacramental Theory according to which the god and his worshippers partake of a victim which is akin to both. The last theory is totemistic. The evidence of the Old Testament confirms the first two theories, but not certainly the last. The burnt-offering is essentially a gift, while the peace-offering is a common meal in which God and man participate. Human sacrifice was the extreme form of the gift-offering, and

[1] Vol. i, chap. i.

[2] Gen. viii. 21.

occurred sporadically in Israel, especially during the last days of the kingdom. The sacrificial feasts were contaminated with Canaanite rites, and sometimes degenerated into debauchery. They were denounced by the eighth-century prophets. Atonement for sin was not sought in the popular sacrifices. The idea of God expressed in sacrifice is anthropomorphic; but sacrifice as a gift is a grateful tribute to God as the Giver of all good things; and as a table-bond it is an attempt to express in a materialistic form the idea of communion between God and man.

## CHAPTER V

# PRIMITIVE IDEAS OF GOD ILLUSTRATED BY HEBREW PROPER NAMES

Before concluding this inquiry into the survival of primitive ideas, something ought to be said with regard to the significance of Hebrew proper names.

That many proper names in Hebrew and in the other Semitic languages have religious meanings is a commonplace. If we had a record of the names borne by individuals in all classes at all periods in Israel's history, important conclusions might, no doubt, be drawn as to the idea of God entertained in various sections of Israelite society. But the names of men and women actually occurring in the Old Testament scriptures are not drawn impartially from all sorts and conditions ; they are mainly the names of those who for one reason or another have become prominent in the national story. The names of those who followed the traditional religion, and were untouched by the currents of advancing thought, are the least likely to make their appearance in the record ; yet they are the ones that would be of most use for our present purpose.

To-day in quiet English villages old Biblical names like Abraham, Amos, Sarah, may still be heard, but they provoke a smile among those classes whose names appear in the records of the events of our day. The parallel need not be pressed, but it will serve to illustrate the point.

Something, however, may be learned from a consideration of the names occurring in the earlier periods of Israel's history before prophetic influence had made itself felt. What follows is drawn chiefly from G. B. Gray's *Studies in Hebrew Proper Names.*

Names such as 'Abijah, Yo'ab, 'Abiel, 'Eli'ab, 'Ammi'el, 'Eli'am,[1] 'Aḥijah, Yo'aḥ, Hi'el,[2] prove that at an early period Yahwe, the God (*'el*) of the Hebrews, was called *'ab* (father), *'aḥ* (brother), and *'am* (kinsman).[3]

The kinship between God and man indicated in such names is not to be understood in a spiritual sense, but is a physical fact; for a careful enumeration of these names shows that they fall into disuse just when, under the influence of prophetic teaching, deeper ideas of God's moral relationship to men were developing.[4] We find ourselves taken back to a type of religion based on kinship,[5] in which the god and his worshippers form a society united by the bond of a common blood. These names, as we might expect, begin to disappear from the Old Testament records soon after the Davidic period, but we may conjecture that they lived on among the people.

Names such as 'Elimelek, 'Adonijah, Ba'aliah[6] show that Yahwe was designated as *melek* (king), *'adon* (lord), and *ba'al* (owner).[7] All of these names denote dominion, and, though comparatively early, are subsequent to the conquest of Canaan, when Yahwe came to be thought of as the lord and owner of the land.

The application of these titles to Yahwe had important consequences in the thought and practice of Israel, for all of them were in use among the inhabitants of Canaan and the neighbouring lands. When Yahwe was called Ba'al, it was easy to identify him with the Ba'alim of the Canaanites, or at least to assimilate him with them, and to take up into his worship the rites with which they were worshipped. *Melek* also was the title of the god of the Phœnicians and the Ammonites. The Melkarth of Tyre is the King of the City, and Milcom is the King of his people Ammon.

The form Molech (or Molek), which is found frequently in our present text of the Old Testament[8] is really Melek,

[1] אֱלִיעָם, עַמִּיאֵל, אֲלִיאָב, אֲבִיאֵל, יוֹאָב, אֲבִיָּה.

[2] חִיאֵל, יוֹאָח, אֲחִיָּה.

[3] עַם, אָח, אָב, אֵל.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 254.

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 48. Cf. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, ed. 2, p. 50.

[6] בַּעֲלְיָה, אֲדַנְיָה, אֱלִימֶלֶךְ.

[7] בַּעַל, אֲדוֹן, מֶלֶךְ.

[8] 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. xxxii. 35; Lev. xviii. 21.

but the consonants of the word have been written with the vowels of the word *bosheth* [1] (shame), to denote abhorrence.

It was to their Melek that the Phœnicians and the Ammonites offered sacrifices of human victims, and the Israelites adopted not merely the divine name but also the awful rites of worship. The terms in which Jeremiah speaks of the human sacrifices at Jerusalem leave no doubt that in the mind of the people at large these offerings were made to Yahwe. "They built the high places of Ba'al which are in the valley of the Son of Hinnom to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Melek, which I commanded not, neither came it unto my mind." [2] There would be no point in Yahwe's protest here, unless the people in sacrificing to Melek believed that they honoured Yahwe.

Gray makes an exhaustive study of animal names in Israel,[3] and his conclusions confirm the position taken up in an earlier part of this essay.[4] He shows that in this class place- and clan-names greatly outnumber those of individuals. Of the whole number of animal names recognized by Gray, thirty-three are names of places, thirty-four are names of clans, and thirty-three are names of individuals (twenty-two Hebrew and eleven foreign). The Hebrew individuals bearing names of this kind are thus distributed: [5] four are directly connected with the patriarchal stories, four with those of the Wandering, two lived in the time of the Judges, four between David and Josiah, and four in the time of Josiah. After this there are none.

Two theories have been put forward to account for the origin of these names. The one finds it in the existence of a totem stage in the development of the people among which such names occur, the other in a kind of natural poetry. According to the former the names are first tribal, then personal; according to the latter they are primarily personal and derivatively tribal.

[1] בֹּשֶׁת.
[2] Jer. xxxii. 35; Cf. xix. 5.
[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 86–115.
[4] Part A, Chap. II.
[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 98.

The " natural poetry " theory does not very well explain why parents should have named their children sometimes after very unattractive animals—fathers and mothers are inclined to regard their own geese as swans—nor yet why these names tend to perish in Israel, except for a brief revival in the time of Josiah.

The totem theory explains most of the facts. On this hypothesis the preponderance of clan-names over personal names is due to the fact that the names were primarily those of totem clans, and the few personal names are due to the break-up of the clan system, which left the names to be appropriated by individuals.

Again, the use of the names of " unclean " animals is due to the sacred character of these names in totem worship, and the occurrence of these names in the time of Josiah is readily explained as a result of the survival and revival of old superstitions in the reign of Manasseh. The virtual cessation of such names after the Exile is explained by the fact that these superstitions were extinct among the classes whose names appear in the records of that time.

Gray holds that the phenomena do not demand the supposition that totem organization lasted in Israel down to historic times—rather the reverse; but that before the amalgamation of the tribes into a nation, totem organization and totem worship existed among some of the peoples of Canaan and some of the Hebrew tribes, especially those dwelling in the South. This manner of worship left behind it certain superstitious ideas, which at times asserted themselves in the subsequent centuries.[1]

SUMMARY.

Hebrew proper names express religious ideas. Names such as Abijah, in which Yahwe is called Father, Brother, Kinsman, indicate belief in physical kinship between God and man. These names become less common under the influence of prophetic teaching. Other names, e.g. Elimelek, Adonijah, Ba'aliah, in which Yahwe is called King, Lord, Owner, appear after the settlement in Canaan, when Yahwe had become Lord of the land. In the late days of the kingdom human sacrifices were offered to Yahwe the King (Melek). A large number of animal names are found. These are

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 114 f.

differently explained by the "natural poetry theory" and the "totem theory." The latter is more probable. The names were originally those of totem-clans, and on the break-up of these clans were appropriated by individuals. Their occurrence points to a totemistic stage before the historic period in Israel.

## CHAPTER VI

# SUMMARY AND INFERENCES FROM THE FOREGOING FACTS

We have now to review and summarize the facts and inferences in the foregoing pages, and to endeavour to see the idea of God as it was conceived in the mind of the people who were little, or not at all, affected by the higher teaching of the prophets and lawgivers. Our judgements must be made with caution, for the data are very fragmentary and derived often from hostile sources. Furthermore, we are seeking to fathom men's minds and motives by a survey of their outward behaviour, a task at all times difficult, and apt to be misleading.

An accumulation of evidence proves that the idea was not monotheistic. Whether or not we admit the hypothesis of a primitive monotheism for which Lagrange argues,[1] we can find nothing to confirm it in the popular beliefs and practices which we have been studying. Yahwe was, indeed, worshipped as the God of all Israel, but his Godhead was not imagined as sole and unique.[2]

On the other hand, there is no justification for assuming a developed polytheism in any stratum of Israel's people, except at times when foreign influences have been evidently at work. The astral worship which was introduced under Manasseh brought within Israel's ken deities possessing personal attributes. In particular, the Queen of Heaven, whose worship was so dearly cherished in the declining days of national life, had a personality clearly defined, and was capable of holding a place beside and apart from Yahwe in the people's faith.

[1] *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*, chap. i.

[2] The use of *Yahwe* as a proper name is proof of this. By this name the God of Israel is distinguished from other gods. Cf. Gunkel: *Gottesbegriff in A.T.*

More doubtfully we may see a tendency towards polytheism when Jezebel sought to impose upon her husband's kingdom the worship of the Zidonian Ba'al.

Solomon's toleration of the gods of his foreign queens is of little importance in this connexion, for its influence is not likely to have spread far beyond the court circle.

What we have clear evidence of is polydæmonism, that is the recognition of numerous spirits in nature, which were credited with superhuman powers, but had not acquired a name and character which would entitle them to be called in the strict sense gods. We have caught glimpses in all periods of the *numen loci*—the spirit of stone or tree or fountain—and sometimes of a divine or dæmonic spirit associated with certain animal species. The spirits of the departed entered within the same superhuman sphere, and were worshipped as *'ĕlōhîm*, and probably a special reverence was paid to the ancestors of the family or clan, whose images (*tĕrāphîm*) stood within the house.

When the Israelites settled in Canaan, and began to till the soil, it was only natural that they should seek the favour of the *ba'alim*, whom their Canaanite neighbours regarded as the givers of fertility. This movement did not, however, issue in polytheism, for the *ba'alim* had too little of a personal character to rank with Yahwe in a national pantheon. What happened was rather a syncretism—a fusion of the *ba'alim* in Yahwe. Since Israel had conquered Canaan, their God had become the *Ba'al* of all the land. It was he, therefore, whom the Israelite worshipped when he came to the local high place and offered his thanksgiving, or presented his petition for the fruits of the soil. But it was often in a Canaanite sanctuary that he worshipped, and with rites that the Canaanite taught him, and hence he tended to give to his idea of Yahwe some of the traits of the Canaanite *ba'alim*.

The results, as we have seen, were both good and evil. Yahwe was brought near to the Israelite as the patron of his daily toil, and religion became an every-day reality. But the *ba'alim* of Canaan had little ethical character,

and the new worship that Israel learned was voluptuous and dissolute. As we learn from Hosea, Israel did not escape its dangers.[1]

Animism lies behind polydæmonism, and serves as the theory whereby primitive men rationalize their experience of an external world. The popular religion of Israel found its explanation of natural phenomena in animism rather than in the creative activity of one all-powerful God.

Animism develops in one direction into totemism, which probably regulated the worship and social organization of the Semitic peoples before history begins. Totemism has left its traces upon Israel, but cannot be proved to have held a place in the common consciousness of the nation in historical times.

The idea of God was certainly anthropomorphic, as is shown by the application to God of the titles Ba'al, Melek, Adon,[2] which describe the divine supremacy in terms derived from the dominion of men in earthly society, as well as titles such as Father, Brother, Kinsman, which predicate of God a physical kinship with his people.

The rite of sacrifice presupposes both animism and anthropomorphism. In so far as sacrifice was a gift, it involved the idea of God as a Ruler, before whom his subjects must not appear empty-handed. In so far as it was a sacramental meal, establishing and maintaining a table-bond, it fostered the idea of God as Kinsman. The blood ritual is inseparable from animistic notions.

Sacrifice has its religious value in the fact that it is the expression of man's dependence upon God, of his gratitude for gifts received, and of his yearning for union with God. Since it is essentially a social act, it emphasizes the fact that God is related to the community, and thus religion is differentiated from fetishism, and generally from magic, which attempt to appropriate the divine power for the benefit of the individual.

[1] The absence of any female counterpart to Yahwe saved Israel from the worst excesses of Semitic nature religion.

[2] Owner, King, Lord.

The nature of the evidence at our disposal makes it difficult to estimate how far God was conceived as a moral Being, and our own inadequate imagination and sympathy hinder us from entering fully into the minds of men whose thoughts were far other than our own. It can at least be said that the Israelite, even apart from prophetic influence, saw in his God a Being whose power was guided ultimately by benevolence, and who was in some sense a God of love. We may feel sure that some sort of moral notion attached to the childish idea of physical paternity—that, as Loisy [1] expresses it : " The rudimentary notion of an all-powerful God can be detected in the natural agent, and the germ of God the Father may be discovered in an anthropomorphic spirit."

Furthermore, God was felt to be the Guardian of social morality, and if as such his character is imperfect, the reason is in the fact that the idea of social duty is undeveloped. Morality is in the main identified with custom, and is expressed in the formula : " No such thing is wont to be done in Israel."[2] God was on the side of the established social order, and might be relied upon to avenge any breach of it. Popular religion, therefore, made for stability, but not usually for progress. Being bound up with custom and tradition, it was naturally conservative, and ideas persisted under the sanction of religion which must have long been repugnant to the moral sense of the more progressive members of the community. Thus we may account for that sexual licence at the local sanctuaries which perpetuated usages long obsolete in ordinary life. Religion came to work against the higher morality, not because it was in itself a power for evil, but because it clung to the ethical standard of a by-gone age, and of a more elementary stage of society.[3]

So also may be explained the long continuance in Israel of the idea that a beneficent God could be pleased with the sacrifice of the firstborn, or with the extermination

[1] *Religion of Israel*, p. 51.
[2] 2 Sam. xiii. 12. Cf. Gen. xx. 9, xxix. 26, xxxiv. 7.
[3] See Robertson Smith : *Religion of the Semites*, ed. 2, p. 53.

33870

of Israel's foes, when they were devoted to Yahwe by the cruel *herem* or ban.[1]

The idea of God as the Guardian of universal morality fails, indeed, to find expression outside the circle of prophetic teaching. Even Yahwe is the God of Israel only, the Leader of its war-hosts ; Israel's enemies are his also, and he is concerned with other peoples only as they affect for good or evil his chosen race. As Israel recognized no duties beyond the limits of kindred blood, so the idea of God was circumscribed by the same limitation. In intertribal or international relations traditional religion was simply stimulative : it was not regulative.[2] In such matters the god went with his own nation or tribe, and his interests were theirs. The popular point of view is plain for all to see in Jephthah's protest to the Ammonites : [3] Yahwe and Chemosh are both of them national gods ready to contend on behalf of their peoples.

Such particularism was then, as now, a main obstacle to the moralizing of the idea of God, and only a few of the noblest minds in Israel before the time of Jesus succeeded in transcending it. Its cramping power always lay heavily on the popular religion. But only in so far as particularism was overcome did ethical monotheism become a possibility.

We may imagine, then, the religion of the uninstructed peasant in Israel at almost any period between Moses and Christ. He lives in a world full of spiritual powers, most of which he fears as potentially hurtful to himself and his social group. With some, however, he has established friendly relations, and he knows how to meet them at the neighbouring sanctuary, where a divine presence is manifested in sacred stone or tree or well. Most probably it is to one only of these divine powers that the individual or his group usually offers worship, who is in fact *his* god, *their* god. To him as *Ba'al* of his land the peasant brings his offering, in order that his fields and flocks may have increase ; at his altar he celebrates his harvest thanksgiving among his fellows ;

[1] Josh. vi. 17. Cf. Lev. xxvii. 28 f. ; Deut. xx. 17.
[2] See Robertson Smith: *Religion of the Semites*, ed. 2, pp. 265 ff.
[3] Judg. xi. 14–27, especially verses 23, 24.

at his altar, when the victim is slain, he feasts with his brethren and the god, and renews the solemn obligations of kinship. His religion colours all his life, and if he represents his god by a material symbol, this serves at least to remind him that he worships a present god, an ever active power, and not a mere abstraction of his mind.

But the peasant belongs not only to his local group. He is a member of a sacred nation whose God is Yahwe. To his banner he may be called, when war's alarm unites the nation in a common effort. He is, perhaps, not very clear whether or not this Yahwe is the same as the Ba'al he worships at home, but on the whole he is faithful to the mighty God who brought his people out of the house of bondage, who revealed himself at Sinai, and led the tribes into Canaan, and gave them the land as an heritage for ever.

The Israelite knows that he ought to do as is wont to be done in Israel, and that he will provoke divine wrath if for some private gain he violates time-honoured custom, though he has but little sense of sin, since he lacks a standard of universal morality. He has learned, however, to be loyal to his kin, and to honour his father and mother, and the loyalty and honour he paid to the living survives the incident of death. Though he may fear the mysterious potency of departed spirits, on the whole his affection predominates. The tomb of his ancestors is a holy spot, and the unity of the family in life and death is expressed and maintained by his offerings at the tomb, or to the *teraphim* he guards and cherishes within the house.

His religion has its darker features on which we have dwelt already ; it sometimes cloaked excess, it was sometimes cruel, it was always narrow, and superstition tended to smother morality. It was for all that a real religion with a continuous effect on life. But it was static, like all nature-religions, and progress towards a higher stage did not come by evolution out of animism, but by a new impulse which had its starting-place in what we may believe to be a fresh revelation of the idea of God in the mind and heart of inspired men.

PART B

# PROPHETIC IDEAS OF GOD: THEIR CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT

## CHAPTER I

# THE CONTENT OF THE PROPHETIC IDEAS

THEIR FULLY DEVELOPED FORM IN DEUTERO-ISAIAH—THE NEAREST APPROACH TO THE MIND OF CHRIST.
MONOTHEISM OF DEUTERO-ISAIAH.
UNIVERSALISM OF THE "SERVANT SONGS."
COMPARISON OF THE TEACHING OF DEUTERO-ISAIAH WITH THAT OF JESUS.

WE have completed for the time being our survey of the popular beliefs inherited from Israel's origins and transmitted throughout the centuries without essential change. In the sequel we shall have occasion to see how these beliefs form a substratum beneath much of the official or legitimate religion, or, to change the metaphor, how they linger on in the subliminal mind even of the orthodox, and from time to time rise into consciousness, and manifest themselves in worship. "Preceding worships," as Loisy[1] says, "never cease to maintain themselves, in spite of everything, in higher and newer religions." The truth of this assertion should become patent in our study of legalism, which will be found to disclose few marks of creative genius, and to be in the main a fusion of the primitive beliefs with the ethical and spiritual ideas of the prophets.

Reverting, then, to the three conceptions of Godhead which we have sketched as existing side by side in Israel in our Lord's day, we see that, assuming this lack of originality in legalism, our proper task will be to consider next the history of the idea of God which finds full expression in Jesus. We have, that is, to trace, if it may be, the antecedents of that idea, or perhaps it would be

[1] *Religion of Israel*, p. 50. Cf. Marti, *Religion of the O.T.*, p. 230. "All that exalts the legal religion above the peasant religion is derived from the prophets."

better to say the preparation of men's minds in Israel to receive his teaching on the heavenly Father.

It is universally acknowledged that the idea of God as conceived by Jesus finds its nearest analogies in the conceptions of the Old Testament prophets;[1] and by a consent almost equally universal, the unknown author of *Isaiah* xl.–lv. gives utterance to the prophetic ideas in their noblest and completest form.[2] Hence we propose first to describe this prophet's conception as exhibiting the content of the prophetic ideas at its best and highest; then to note the modification of that content in detail by those who followed the unknown prophet; and afterwards to trace back the interpretation of the idea of God in the prophets who preceded the great Unknown.

First, then, we consider the content of the prophetic idea in *Isaiah*, chaps. xl.–lv.

In reading these chapters we cannot fail to be impressed by the author's reiterated emphasis upon the sole Godhead of Yahwe, the God of Israel. "Before me was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am Yahwe; and beside me there is no saviour." "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." "I am Yahwe, and there is none else; beside me there is no God."[3] Declarations like these record the prophet's profound belief in Yahwe as the one, the only God, and deny categorically the existence of all others called gods by the nations of the earth. "Deutero-Isaiah drops the key-stone of the monotheistic arch into its place."[4] Nowhere in earlier literature do we find such explicit statements as these; nowhere in later writings is there such emphasis.

We may well wonder at the courage and intensity of this faith in the sole supremacy of the God of an oppressed and humiliated people, dwelling as exiles in the midst of a great empire, and surrounded by the magnificent temples of the gods of Babylon. We may

[1] Cf. Gore: *Belief in God.*

[2] "Das letzte Wort über den Gottesbegriff hat Deuterojesaia ausgesprochen." Gunkel, *loc. cit.*

[3] Isa. xliii. 10 f, xliv. 6, xlv. 5. Cf. xliv. 8, xlv. 6, 14, 18.

[4] H. W. Robinson: *Religious Ideas of the O.T.*, p. 60.

well ask how it was that Yahwe came to be exalted to this unique position. We shall discover the answer in the history of prophecy. It is right, however, at this point to direct attention to the wonder of this faith, for it is inconceivable that it could have evolved out of the popular traditional religion, whose features we have been studying. It stands in a different line of development, and forces us to assume a different starting-point.

The monotheism of Deutero-Isaiah seems to be absolute: its further development seems to be as impossible as it is unnecessary, and the doctrine stamped itself upon all the higher minds of Israel ever after. Jesus does not need to assert the sole and unique deity of the heavenly Father. It is for him, as for his hearers, an unquestioned assumption.

There is some cause for surprise, therefore, when we find Whitehouse writing: [1] "It may be that the Deutero-Isaiah closely approximates an absolute monotheism, but does not actually reach it." We are ready to admit that "Absolute monotheism was obtained more slowly than most readers of the Old Testament imagine," [2] but the verses already quoted are as explicit a statement of absolute monotheism as could be demanded.[3]

Whitehouse grounds his assertion on chap. xli. 21–23, which he thinks is not merely rhetorical, but assumes the existence of other gods than Yahwe. "Declare the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods." Either this sentence must be taken as pure irony, or else the reiterated assertions, "I am the first and the last; and beside me there is no God," must be taken as merely rhetorical. The second alternative appears incredible; but it seems to be necessitated, if Whitehouse's view is admitted. He argues that the gods of the heathen are not believed to be non-existent, but are degraded to the rank of demons. If we grant him this assumption, the thought of the prophet would still be compatible with absolute monotheism. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "The things which

[1] *Commentary on Isaiah*, vol. ii, p. 38. [2] *Loc. cit.*

3 Cf. Gunkel, *loc. cit.*, who argues that when Israel entered into world-politics Yahwe must become all or nothing.

the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I would not that ye should have communion with demons. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons." [1] Are we, then, prepared to say of St. Paul that "he approximates an absolute monotheism, but does not reach it?" Or does Jesus himself fail to reach it, when he asks: "If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out?" [2] Beelzebub was the old god of Ekron, now degraded to the rank of a demon.[3]

We are on surer ground if we take the position that it is *Isaiah* xli. 22 f. which is rhetorical, and the other numerous passages [4] literal, and that in the prophet's idea of God we do find an absolute and explicit monotheism. With this view many of the other statements in these chapters are in agreement.

The *eternity* of Yahwe is asserted in the words: "I Yahwe, the first and the last, I am he." [5] His *unchangeable power* and *wisdom* are declared, since "Yahwe is an everlasting God, Creator of the ends of the earth; there is no searching of his understanding." [6] His *omnipotence* is proved by his creative work, for "he measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance." [7]

Yahwe's work in creation is not carried out in conflict with hostile powers; he is not like Marduk, who must first slay the monster Tiâmat ere he can form the firmament with the half of her severed body.[8] (*Isaiah* li. 9 is again poetical and rhetorical.) Creation is by the *fiat* of Yahwe: he spake and it was done. "Mine hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spread out the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand together," [9] i.e. appear ready-created at the word

[1] 1 Cor. x. 21 f.
[2] Matt. xii. 27. Greek MSS. read *βεελζεβούλ*, but Syrr. and Vg. have Beelzebub as R.V.
[3] Cf. 2 Kings i. 2, 6.
[4] I.e. xliii. 10, xliv. 6, etc., *vide supra*.
[5] xli. 4. Cf. xliv. 6.
[6] xl. 28 R.V. marg.
[7] xl. 12. Cf. xl. 22 ff, xl. 28, xlii. 5, xliv. 24, xlv. 12, 18.
[8] Cf. Babylonian Creation Tablets, iv. ll. 135 ff.
[9] xlviii. 13.

of command. In like manner he is the maker of all men, "calling the generations from the beginning." [1] In history his means of action is the prophetic word—"It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." [2] The word of Yahwe is irresistible and eternal,[3] and the prophet sees in it one of the strongest evidences of the solity [4] and omnipotence of Yahwe. "Who hath declared it of old? have not I, Yahwe? and there is no god else beside me." [5]

A god who is thus omnipotent and eternal, before whom the nations are as a drop hanging on the side of a bucket, is not to be represented by an image.[6] "What likeness will ye compare unto him?" [7] The Deutero-Isaiah pours scorn and contempt upon the idols of the heathen. For the prophet the idols are so entirely a thing of nought [8] that he can regard them with a grim humour, when he speaks of the idolator who gets him a suitable log, and with one half warms himself and bakes bread, while with the other he makes a god: "he falleth down unto it and worshippeth and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god." [9] Something less than justice is done here to the heathen, for we may well doubt whether any man was so irrational as to worship stocks and stones as such. But Deutero-Isaiah does not measure his words when he thinks of the incomparable Yahwe in contrast with the unreality of the heathen gods.

Not only in power but in moral character also Yahwe is immeasurably exalted. He is the "Holy One of Israel." [10] The title carries us back to the Trisagion of the eighth-century Isaiah, and here as there holiness is a moral attribute, not the semi-physical quality which we have had to note in the "popular" religion. "Thus saith Yahwe . . . the Holy One of Israel: I am Yahwe thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadest thee

[1] xli. 4. [2] lv. 11. [3] xl. 8.
[4] I.e. the fact that he is the *only* God.
[5] xlv. 21. Cf. xli. 25 ff., xlii. 9, xliii. 10 ff., xliv. 7 f., xliv. 26 f., xlvi. 10 f., xlviii. 3 ff. [6] xl. 15. [7] xl. 18.
[8] xli. 29. [9] xliv. 9 ff. Cf. xlvi. 6 f.
[10] xli. 14, 16, xliii. 3, 14, xlv. 11, xlvii. 4, xlviii. 17, xlix. 7.

by the way that thou shouldest go. Oh! that thou wouldest heaken unto my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."[1] Yahwe's holiness is still his "separateness," but not because he is "taboo" in the ceremonial sense, but because he is uplifted high above all sin and imperfection.

He is high and holy indeed, but yet not aloof from his people. The tenderness and mercy of God are as sure as his holiness. The words in which Deutero-Isaiah describes the loving care of Yahwe bring us near to the heavenly Father of Jesus. "He shall lead his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs in his arm."[2] "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, these may forget, yet will I not forget thee."[3] Or, in another metaphor drawn from the most intimate relations of human life: "Yahwe hath called thee as a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even a wife of youth, when she is cast off, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee."[4]

A frequent designation of God in *Deutero-Isaiah* is the "Redeemer"—"*Go'el*."[5] The Hebrew word has a long history behind it. In the first place it means "one who purchases back a person or a thing." The term is specially applied to the avenger of blood, i.e. the kinsman who was charged with vindicating the blood of the clan at the price of the blood of the murderer who shed it. In this sense the word goes back to the old nomadic law of the desert,[6] but the meaning had become enlarged, and in the later poetic language it was used of God redeeming individuals from death and from every kind of ill, or Israel from Egyptian bondage.[7]

In our prophet Yahwe is the *Go'el*, because he acts, as it were, a kinsman's part in delivering Israel from the Exile: he buys back his people at a price.

[1] xlviii. 17, 18. [2] xl. 11. [3] xlix. 15.
[4] liv. 6, 7. [5] גֹּאֵל.

[6] Robertson Smith: *Religion of the Semites*, ed. 2, pp. 272, 420.
[7] Cf. Ps. ciii. 4; Hos. xiii. 14; Gen. xlviii. 16; Jer. l. 34; Exod. xv. 3; Ps. lxxiv. 2, lxxvii. 15, etc.

Yahwe's motive in redeeming Israel, as in choosing Israel to be his servant at the beginning, is not only that he loved his people,[1] but that his own high purpose may be fulfilled, and that all flesh may know that he is the saviour, the redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.[2] He acts for the honour of his name[3] and will not give his glory to others,[4] as if they had accomplished what is his alone. We seem to touch here a lower ethical level, if Yahwe's motive for all his mighty and gracious acts is conceived as anything else than love. But if he acts for his name's sake, or for his own sake,[5] it is not merely to enhance his reputation. His name is his own revealed character, and as his name becomes known in all the earth, so does all that his name connotes of power and wisdom and goodness. The knowledge of Yahwe is in fact his best gift to men.

Israel, however, did not rise to the height of its vocation as God's servant. Yahwe remonstrates: "Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities."[6] Therefore Yahwe had punished his people by delivering them into the hands of the Babylonians.[7] But the punishment was not to be without measure, and he did not intend the Babylonians to be pitiless, as they had in fact been;[8] for Israel's guilt has now been doubly expiated.[9] The coming deliverance is to be by Yahwe's free favour, not for Israel's merit, inasmuch as the people had sinned from the beginning; nor yet, again, is it to be because of sacrifice and burnt-offering.[10] Yahwe will blot out transgression for his own name's sake.[11] Such a doctrine of full and free forgiveness once more brings us near to the heart of the heavenly Father.

Yahwe had declared his righteousness in the punishment of his people; but he is righteous not only because he acts in strict justice, but also because righteousness

[1] xliii. 3 f.
[2] xlix. 26.
[3] xlviii. 9 ff.
[4] xlii. 8.
[5] xlviii. 9, 11. But possibly xlviii. 8 *b*–10 is an addition to the original text.
[6] xliii. 24.
[7] xlii. 23 ff., l. 1.
[8] xlvii. 6.
[9] xl. 2.
[10] xliii. 22 ff., xlviii. 1.
[11] xliii. 25, xliv. 22.

is a quality of his own character, closely allied to his faithfulness, and displayed in his activity for the salvation of his people.[1] They have rebelled, but he is still consistent and will fulfil his promises. "I bring near my righteousness, and my salvation shall not tarry."[2]

Has the idea of God in Deutero-Isaiah risen above particularism and nationalism? Is Yahwe the God of all peoples equally? The answer must be, No, if we have regard to the bulk of these chapters. Israel is Yahwe's chosen—chosen not only for special service but for special privilege. The prophet still thinks of the Gentile nations as existing for Israel's advantage and honour. The Holy One of Israel declares to his chosen: "I have given Egypt as thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee."[3] "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their faces to the earth, and lick the dust of thy feet."[4] The restored Israel shall, indeed, draw to itself other peoples because of Yahwe its God, but Israel is still to be the leader and commander of the peoples who run to behold its God-given glory. It is in Zion that Yahwe shall reign.[5]

A far higher conception, however, is reached in the so-called Servant Songs.[6] In these the idea of God is in the fullest sense universal; Yahwe's purpose embraces all the nations for their own sake, and Israel is elected not only to serve but also to suffer on their behalf.

There has been endless controversy as to whether the Servant Songs were written by the same author as the rest of *Isaiah* xl.–lv. Kautzsch,[7] after reviewing the literature, holds that "it may be considered as henceforth a position that is not likely to be shattered that even the so-called Ebed-Yahwe Songs are the work of Deutero-Isaiah."

It is a serious matter to dissent from the weighty judgement of Kautzsch, and it may be that the Songs were composed by the same author earlier than the rest of the chapters, and that time and bitter experience had brought about a narrowing and

[1] xlii. 6. See Kautzsch in *H.D.B.*, v. 683 *n.*
[2] xlvi. 13.
[3] xliii. 3.
[4] xlix. 23.
[5] lii. 7 f., lv. 4 f.
[6] xlii. 1–4, xlix. 1–6, l. 4–9, lii. 13–liii. 12.
[7] In *H.D.B.*, v. 707 *b.*

hardening of his mind; but the difference between the Servant Songs and the rest of the chapters on the capital point of Yahwe's universalism and Israel's mission seems so profound that it forbids the assignment of these Songs to the Deutero-Isaiah. He undoubtedly incorporated them in his own work, with which they are interwoven by subtle threads of connexion; he admired them and ardently appreciated their lofty sentiments, but they were not an integral part of his own thought. The writer of *Isaiah* xlix. 22 ff., with its climax: "I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood," cannot have originated the idea of the Suffering Servant.[1]

It is not of importance to decide whether the Servant (who is now generally recognized as Israel) is the empirical Israel, the nation as a whole, or an "Israel within Israel," a spiritual kernel of the nation. Peake's hypothesis[2] meets most, if not all, of the conditions of the problem: "The Servant is not an ideal distinct from the nation, but the nation regarded from an ideal point of view." Probably, however, it is the nation as exiled in Babylon that the prophet has in mind.

The first, second, and fourth of the Songs are those which most clearly describe the relation of Yahwe and his Servant to the heathen world.

In the first Song we hear Yahwe's description of his Servant, of his gentle modesty, his tender regard for others, and his unfaltering pursuit of truth.[3] "He shall bring forth judgement to the nations."[4] The word rendered "judgement"—Hebrew *mishpaṭ*[5]—denotes in the singular the entirety of the "judgements" or "customs" of Yahwe's religion, as "law"—*tora*[6]—in the singular denotes the sum of his "laws" or, rather, "teachings." We might, indeed, paraphrase by saying that the Servant's function is to bring the true religion to the heathen nations.

In the second Song the text is uncertain, but the general

[1] This consideration strongly militates against the argument of Sigmund Mowinckel (adopted by H. Gunkel in *Ein Vorläufer Jesu*) that the Servant in the Songs is none other than Deutero-Isaiah himself. See an article by J. E. McFadyen in the *Expository Times* of April 1923.

[2] *The Problem of Suffering*, p. 193.

[3] xlii. 1–4.

[4] xlii. 1.

[5] מִשְׁפָּט.

[6] תּוֹרָה.

meaning is plain. Whitehouse,[1] following Dillmann and Duhm, translates xlix. 6 thus :—

> 'Tis task too slight to establish Jacob's tribes,
> And to bring back the preserved of Israel;
> Yea, rather, I make thee a light of the Gentiles,
> That my salvation may be as far as the earth's end.

Here we have a universalism as complete as that of the Gospel according to St. Luke.[2]

The last Song touches a height of idealism such that in the New Testament its conceptions are not transferred to the Christian Israel but only to the Christ himself. For the Servant is now portrayed not only as the prophetic nation but as the martyr nation, and the Gentiles themselves bear witness that he has suffered for their sake. They had seen him "despised and rejected of men"; they had esteemed him "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"; but now they understood that he suffered on their behalf, and they confess: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Yahwe hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."[3]

Here we have a universalism which is without reserve, and which proves the monotheism of the poet even more surely than the categorical assertions of the Deutero-Isaiah.

We may pause to compare the idea of God in Deutero-Isaiah with that enshrined in the teaching of Jesus. In many respects there is close likeness. Deutero-Isaiah asserts, Jesus assumes, the unity and solity of God. In neither is there even a possibility of confusing God with the universe, or of reducing the fullness of his being to the abstract notion of a First Cause or Law of Phenomena. There is enough of anthropomorphism in the teaching of both to retain for us the conception of God as a Person distinct from the world, capable of being known and of entering into relations with mankind. Both, however, emphasize the transcendence of God: he is no mere magnified man, no projection upon the heavens of an Oriental king. He is for both the Everlasting, and both

[1] *Isaiah*, vol. ii, p. 157. [2] Luke ii. 29–32. [3] Isa. liii. 6.

attribute to him such a plenitude of power and knowledge as might be termed omnipotence and omniscience.

Deutero-Isaiah (apart from the Servant Songs) has not entirely outgrown nationalism in his conception of God—for him Yahwe is still pre-eminently the God of Israel. This nationalism is, indeed, inconsistent with his fundamental doctrine; but this need cause us no surprise, for we know that the first followers of Jesus could not free themselves from its toils, and it found its way even into the report of the sayings of the Master himself.[1]

Both Jesus and Deutero-Isaiah recognize in God the perfection of righteousness, and regard sin as an offence against that righteousness; but in Deutero-Isaiah idolatry is the sin most often denounced, whereas, in the teaching of Jesus, sin is entirely ethical, a violation of the law of love to God and man. Yet we cannot doubt that he who wrote: "let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto Yahwe, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,"[2] is the heir of the eighth-century prophets, and that, if he says less than they do about social morality, it is because his purpose is different from theirs: his message is one of comfort for an afflicted and discouraged people; theirs was one of rebuke and threatening against a prosperous and self-confident one.

To this limitation of the prophet's theme may be ascribed the paucity of references to God's dealings with the individual as such. Yet the description of Yahwe as the Shepherd of Israel[3] shows his care not only for the flock as a whole, but also for the members of it in their special needs. Moreover, we have a clear delineation of individual religion in the passage just cited.[4] In this the sin and the repentance are those of the individual, and he it is who is abundantly pardoned.

Deutero-Isaiah, like Jesus, finds in repentance the sole condition of forgiveness, and makes no demand for sacrifice and burnt-offering.[5] Yahwe's redemption is not

[1] Cf. Matt. x. 5 f, xv. 24.
[2] Isa. lv. 7.
[3] xl. 11.
[4] lv. 6–8.
[5] Cf. xliii. 23–25.

purchased by his people, but is entirely of his free grace. Trust in God's redeeming grace, in his active intervention on behalf of his people, is characteristic of both teachers; but in Deutero-Isaiah the redemption is mainly from Babylonian captivity, while in Jesus it is from sin with its consequent misery and alienation from God.

What we chiefly miss in Deutero-Isaiah is the note of intimate companionship between God and man which is heard in the cry "Abba, Father"; we are made to feel usually man's littleness before God and his distance from the Holy One of Israel rather than his nearness as a son to the heavenly Father. Hence, while we trace the likeness in the intellectual content of the idea of God in the one case and the other, we are conscious of the profound difference in the emotional setting and resultant moral power.

SUMMARY.

Prophetic ideas culminate in the teaching of 2 *Isaiah*, which is explicitly monotheistic. God is declared to be everlasting, all-knowing, almighty. He manifests his power in creation and in history. He cannot be represented by any image, and idolatry is absurd. He is the Holy One of Israel, and as such is a supreme moral Person. In 2 *Isaiah* "Holiness" is entirely ethical. Yahwe is tender towards his people, and is their Redeemer from all ill according to his unchanging purpose. He blots out the transgressions of his people for his own Name's sake, not because of sacrifice or offering. 2 *Isaiah* has not yet risen above nationalism in his conception of God, but in the Servant Songs which he incorporates in his work a complete universalism is reached. The ideal Israel is to be a missionary nation, bringing the true religion to the other nations, and a martyr nation, suffering vicariously for them. A comparison between 2 *Isaiah* and Jesus reveals close similarity in the intellectual content of the idea of God, but 2 *Isaiah* lacks the sense of intimate communion between God and man which distinguishes the teaching of Jesus.

## CHAPTER II

## THE CONTENT OF THE PROPHETIC IDEAS—
## (*continued*)

THE DEVELOPED FORM MODIFIED IN DETAIL—

(*a*) IN THE POST-EXILIC PROPHETS;
(*b*) IN THE PRIESTLY CODE;
(*c*) IN THE PSALTER;
(*d*) IN THE WISDOM LITERATURE;
(*e*) IN THE APOCALYPTIC WRITINGS.

THE high teaching of the unknown prophet of the Exile remained through the centuries a source of inspiration for Israel till the day came when it helped to mould the thought of Jesus himself. We have now to ask whether in these intervening years Israel's teachers had made advance in their apprehension of the divine nature and character—whether they modified for better or worse the Idea of God.

The literature of this period is wide in its range and varied in type. Within it are included the Post-Exilic prophets, the Priestly Code of the Pentateuch, the Psalter, the Wisdom books within and without the Canon, and the series of books classed under the general head of Apocalyptic.

In reviewing this literature we shall consider the conceptions found in it of the being and attributes of God, his moral character, his relations with Israel and mankind, and his activity in the world through his Spirit or through intermediaries such as the angels.

### (*a*) POST-EXILIC PROPHETS.

Prophecy continued for a while after the Exile, but it lost its free creative power, and its conceptions of the Godhead are plainly derivative and secondary. The

writers to be considered are Haggai, Zechariah, the Trito-Isaiah, Malachi, and Joel, together with numerous interpolations in the work of the pre-Exilic prophets.

It is clear in the first place that after the Exile monotheism held undisputed sway in the higher religious thought of Israel. Belief in the unity and solity of Yahwe are the common possession of the post-Exilic prophets. There is little need of any polemic against idolatry, and the denunciations of *Isaiah* lvii. 3 ff. are addressed not to the bulk of the people but to the half-heathen mixed population in and about Judah.

The spirituality and the omnipresence of the eternal God are beautifully expressed by Trito-Isaiah: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit."[1] Here in a sentence are combined the transcendence and the nearness of God.

The omnipotence and omnipresence of Yahwe are forcibly expressed in the late additions to the book of Jeremiah. "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom." "There is nothing too hard" for him. The Babylonians are his battle-axe and weapons of war wherewith he breaks in pieces the nations.[2] If statements like these are comparatively few in the post-Exilic prophets, it is because there is little to add to the explicit utterances of Deutero-Isaiah.

In the Prayer of Habakkuk Yahwe is, indeed, localized at Sinai;[3] but the passage is evidently poetic and no more than a reminiscence of the ancient Song of Deborah.[4]

So, again, the supramundane character of Yahwe is by no means compromised by the fact that he has his dwelling on Zion—it is "his glory" that is there, a "manifestation-form of his presence not identical with his full being."[5]

In one or two passages an approach is made to the Fatherhood of God. In *Trito-Isaiah* the prophet recalls

[1] Isa. lvii. 15.
[2] Jer. x. 12 ff., xxxii. 17, li. 20 ff.
[3] Hab. iii. 3.
[4] Judg. v. 4.
[5] Kautzsch in *H.D.B.*, v. 709. Cf. Zech. ii. 4 f., 10, viii. 3; Isa. iv. 5, lx. 2.

the days of old when Yahwe said : " Surely they are my people, children that will not deal falsely." [1] So " in his love and in his pity he redeemed them ; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." And later in the same chapter the people appeal : " Thou art our father, though Abraham knoweth us not ; and Israel doth not acknowledge us : thou, O Yahwe, art our father ; our redeemer from everlasting is thy name." [2]

God is still, however, regarded as the Father of the nation rather than the individual, and in another passage " father " seems to mean little more than " creator." " But now, O Yahwe, thou art our father ; we are the clay, and thou our potter ; and we are all the work of thy hand." [3] A nearer approach to the ethical aspect of the idea occurs in *Isaiah* lxvi. 13, though here only in a simile : " As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." [4]

Malachi twice introduces the idea of the divine Fatherhood into his dialectic, but in both cases the son is the nation collectively rather than the individual Israelite.[5] In the second case, however, the idea is used to enforce the duty of a more brotherly behaviour between man and man. " Have we not all one father ? hath not one God created us ? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother ? "

The prophet has, however, no reason to advance for the special position and privilege of Israel as Yahwe's son other than Yahwe's arbitrary choice (" I loved Jacob ; but Esau I hated "), [6] and he fails to attain to the thought of Deutero-Isaiah that Israel's election is to service in the accomplishment of the universal purpose of God.

But, though he belongs to a narrow school, Malachi has one bright vision of the universal worship of Yahwe : " For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense and a pure oblation are offered." [7] The thought is equally remarkable whether

[1] Isa. lxiii. 8 f. [2] Isa. lxiii. 16. [3] Isa. lxiv. 8.
[4] Cf. Mal. iii. 17. [5] Mal. i. 6, ii. 10. [6] Mal. i. 2 f.
[7] Mal. i. 11.

we regard the author as speaking in a prophetic present, or as declaring that, while Israel was unfaithful, the Gentiles were honouring Yahwe's name, though they knew it not, and that their unwitting worship was acceptable to him.

In the *Trito-Isaiah* Yahwe declares : " Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all nations " ; [1] but the universalism here is not quite that of the Servant Songs, for the writer appears to think of the Gentiles as approaching Yahwe only because they are joined as proselytes to Israel.

The *Trito-Isaiah* comes to us, indeed, from a time when the line of separation between Jew and Gentile was being sharply drawn by Ezra and Nehemiah and their followers. If he, however, accepted their views, there were some who did not. The book of *Jonah*, which may be of this date, is throughout a noble protest against the exclusiveness of the Jewish idea of God. So also, possibly, is the book of *Ruth*, with its beautiful picture of the piety of the Moabitess.

The moral character of Yahwe as displayed in his requirements from man is conceived along the lines already drawn by the pre-Exilic prophets. Although ritual observances now take a larger place in the life of the community, the superiority of moral service over all ceremonial is still emphasized, as in *Trito-Isaiah* : " Is not this the fast that I have chosen ? to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free." [2] The sins of violence and perversion of justice are denounced, as they are by the eighth-century prophets, and there is the same demand for mercy to the poor and down-trodden.[3] Zechariah's words in chap. vii. 8 f. might well have been written by Amos or Hosea : " Execute true judgement, and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother : and oppress not the widows, nor the fatherless, nor the stranger, nor the poor ; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart." [4]

[1] Isa. lvi. 7.
[2] Isa. lviii. 6 ff.
[3] Isa. lix. 2 ff.
[4] Cf. Zech. viii. 16 f. ; Mal. iii. 5 ff.

The doctrine of retribution, i.e. the correspondence between men's material prosperity and their moral desert, is prominent in *Haggai* and *Zechariah* as the method of God's government, and in *Malachi* plenty is promised as the reward for the faithful payment of tithes.[1] Haggai and Zechariah anticipate the coming of Yahwe to give peace and protection when his house is rebuilt.[2] We may contrast this with the expectation of Malachi that when Yahwe comes to his temple, he will come in judgement to purify his people.[3]

The Spirit of Yahwe, mentioned frequently in *Deutero-Isaiah*, is referred to in most of the succeeding prophets, but in no passage is the spirit conceived personally. The spirit is rather "the conscious vital force peculiar to God,"[4] the divine activity manifested as an energizing and controlling power.

In *Joel* the ancient idea of the spirit as the efficient cause of the prophetic ecstasy is revived,[5] perhaps for the last time among Old Testament writers before its rejection in the Greek period by the author of the appendix to *Zechariah*.[6] Joel declares that in the happier days to come Yahwe will pour out his spirit "upon all flesh." It is tempting to see in this prophecy an anticipation of a universal revelation of God, but the context seems to forbid this,[7] and refers us rather to the aspiration of Moses: "Would God that all Yahwe's people were prophets, that Yahwe would put his spirit upon them."[8]

The functions of the Spirit in Exilic and post-Exilic prophecy are varied. Now the Spirit is regarded as an inward power impelling men to utter instruction or warning, as in *Isaiah* lxi. 1: "The spirit of my lord Yahwe is upon me; because Yahwe hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek."[9] Now, the Spirit imparts executive and administrative powers, as e.g. to the Servant of Yahwe, of whom God says: "I have put

[1] Zech. viii. 12 ff.; Hag. i. 5, 6, 10, 11; Mal. iii. 10.
[2] Hag. ii. 9; Zech. i. 16. [3] Mal. iii. 1.
[4] Cf. Davidson: *O.T. Theology*, p. 127.
[5] Joel ii. 28 f. [6] Zech. xiii. 3.
[7] So Nowack and G. A. Smith; *contra* Horton, "Minor Prophets" in *Century Bible*, p. 104. [8] Num. xi. 29.
[9] Cf. Zech. vii. 12, Isa. xlviii. 16 (an interpolation probably).

my spirit upon him ; he shall bring forth judgement to the nations."[1] Again, the Spirit is an energy of life reviving Israel's land and people.[2]

In *Haggai* and *Zechariah* the Spirit is equivalent in function to the Angel of the Presence[3] in the older literature or the Shekina in the later. " Ye came out of Egypt, and my spirit abode in you."[4] This line of thought culminates in the identification of the Spirit with the divine presence in *Psalm* cxxxix, where the Spirit is in all places, in heaven, and in *She'ol*, and in the uttermost parts of the earth.[5]

The increased insistence upon the transcendent majesty of God leads in the later prophets to the introduction of intermediaries between Yahwe and man. No longer does Yahwe speak face to face with the prophet " as a man speaketh to his friend " ;[6] no longer does he appear directly in vision or dream, as he did to Jacob at Beth-el ;[7] he communicates with men now by angels. Zechariah, e.g., never sees Yahwe or is spoken to directly by him. We read instead of the interpreting angel, " the man who talked with me,"[8] and, in other places, of the Angel of Yahwe himself, who represents Yahwe, and yet from another point of view is independent of him.[9] We are conscious here of the fading of the old vivid sense of Yahwe's personal and practical interest in men. The prophet may avoid anthropomorphism, but it is at the cost of the vitality of his religion. A similar notion is found in Malachi,[10] who uses the term " messenger (or angel) of the covenant " as a synonym for " the Lord," i.e. the messenger is Yahwe himself in a representative form.

To the same tendency to remove Yahwe from immediate contact with men we owe, probably, the figure of the Satan in Zechariah—a figure already familiar, if we may judge from the way in which the prophet introduces it.[11] The Satan appears also in the Prologue to the book of *Job*.[12] In both places he plays the same rôle. He is a

[1] Isa. xlii. 1. [2] Isa. xliv. 3 ; Zech. iv. 6.
[3] *Vide infra*. [4] Hag. ii. 5. Cf. Zech. ii. 10.
[5] Ps. cxxxix. 7. [6] Ex. xxxiii. 11. [7] Gen. xxviii. 13.
[8] Zech. i. 13, etc. [9] i. 11 f., iii. 1–6. [10] Mal. iii. 1.
[11] Zech. iii. 1. [12] Job i. 2.

superhuman being, one of the angels of Yahwe's court, and obedient to his will. His part is to act as "the Adversary," and to oppose men in their pretensions to righteousness. He is not definitely described as evil, still less as fallen, but his own personal wishes are on the side of evil, and his disposition towards men is unfriendly.[1] The conception is, therefore, tending towards that of the New Testament, where Satan is the Tempter and the Prince of the evil spirits.

In neither of the present passages is the Satan in rebellion against God, and there is no hint of any theory of dualism. A link between the Satan of *Job* and *Zechariah* and the Satan of the New Testament is to be found in 1 *Chronicles* xxi. 1, where Satan (the name is here used without the article) is said to have instigated David to the sin of numbering Israel. Here Satan is a tempter of evil, and it is hard to agree with Driver's opinion that he does not appear in the Old Testament as definitely tempting to sin.[2]

The three passages show, at any rate, that there was a desire in the post-Exilic prophets to exempt God from direct responsibility for acts of temptation and destruction, and that there would have been some hesitation in subscribing to the dictum of Deutero-Isaiah : "I form the light and create darkness ; I make peace and create evil."[3]

We may without hesitation ascribe the origin of the idea of the angels as well as that of the Satan to the old nature-religion. The *'ĕlōhîm* of the old popular belief have been brought within the circle of the religion of Yahwe, and made subordinate to him, so that they have become his agents in revelation, in providence, and in the moral testing of mankind.[4]

### (*b*) The Priestly Document.

The Priestly document in the Pentateuch may be considered here, as being without a doubt a work of the Exilic or post-Exilic age.

[1] Zech. iii. 2.
[2] In commentary on "Zechariah," *Century Bible*, p. 194.
[3] Isa. xlv. 7.
[4] Cf. Schultz : *O.T. Theology*, vol. ii, pp. 278 ff.

Its conception of God as living, personal, but spiritual, has been described as "a product of perfected prophetism." [1]

For the most part P is interested in the theocratic institutions of Israel rather than the character of God himself, but at the outset of the compiler's narrative in the creation story we have the classic expression of the doctrine of monotheism. The central thought of the story is that the world is *created*, that it originates in the will of God, who is a personal being transcending the universe and independent of it. Pantheism is obviously excluded by the whole tenor of the narrative, nor could the Priestly writers have admitted the notion that the universe is an emanation from God, or the product of an age-long evolution from a primeval world-stuff, whether or not guided by an immanent divine principle.

No stress ought to be laid on the words of *Genesis* i. 1 : "the spirit of God was hovering (or brooding) upon the face of the waters," as though they express a doctrine of divine immanence. The idea of the spirit of God as the formative principle in the universe is indeed analogous to the doctrine that it is the source of life ; [2] but it goes far beyond it, and occurs only here, unless *Isaiah* xl. 13 is another instance. The image in "brooding" or "hovering" may rest upon the ancient speculation of the world-egg, and may therefore be a reminiscence of Semitic mythology. In any case the clause in *Genesis* i. 1 is "a fragment not vitally connected with the narrative." [3]

Other traces of mythology, e.g. the Deep (Hebrew *Tĕhôm* ; Babylonian *Tiâmat*) and the plural in verse 26, "let us make man in our image," do not affect the theological standpoint of P. They are only evidence of the compiler's knowledge of primitive traditions whose theological ideas have been entirely transformed in their passage through the Hebrew mind.

It is doubtful whether the compiler of P thought of the divine work as a creation out of nothing. If the

[1] Kautzsch in *H.D.B.*, v. 715 *b*.
[2] Cf. Gen. vi. 3 ; Job xxvii. 3 ; Ps. civ. 29 f.
[3] Skinner : *I.C.C.*, "Genesis," p. 18.

first verse of the chapter be taken as an independent statement, it may imply a *creatio ex nihilo*; but if it be subordinate to verse 2 or verse 3 (as is more probable), then the prior existence of heaven and earth as a primeval chaos is assumed.[1] The verb *bārā'* [2] does not require the meaning "create out of nothing," though it has a fuller theological content than the synonymous *'āsā* (make) and *yāṣar* (form).[3] It is used exclusively of divine activity, and implies the novelty [4] or the extraordinariness [5] of the result, and the absence of effort in its production.[6] The additional fact that it is used always with the accusative of the product not of the material makes "create" a fit rendering for it. We are certainly carried far on the way to the theological doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, but we do not reach its explicit statement till we come to 2 *Maccabees* vii. 28. Probably the Priestly writer had not thought out the question. It was enough for him to emphasize the effortless accomplishment of God's purpose, his wisdom in the progressive order of his work, all of which in all its parts was good, inasmuch as he uses no agent or instrument in creation, but calls all into being by his mere word.

It is important to notice the absence of all intermediaries in P, who makes no mention of angels, perhaps because he regarded the necessity of sending them in some sort of bodily form as a degradation of the divine activity. The same insistence on the spirituality of God is seen in P's scrupulous avoidance of anthropomorphism. (Rare exceptions are *Genesis* ii. 2 f. and *Exodus* xxxi. 17b.) Revelation takes in P the form of simple speech, and although theophanies are mentioned, they are not described. God appears, but the manner of his appearance is not indicated, except in the culminating vision at Sinai, and then only in vague terms.[7]

Yet man, according to P, is created "in the image

[1] Cf. Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

[2] בָּרָא.

[3] יָצַר, עָשָׂה.

[4] Isa. xli. 20, xlviii. 6 f., lxv. 17 f.; Jer. xxxi. 22.

[5] Exod. xxxiv. 10; Num. xvi. 30.

[6] Ps. xxxiii. 9.

[7] Gen. xvii. 1, 22 f., xxxv. 9, xxxv. 13, xlviii. 3; Exod. vi. 3, xxiv. 16 f., xxxiv. 29, xl. 34 f.

of God" and "after his likeness." Many explain this statement as meaning that the image and likeness are not bodily, but that man like God belongs to the class of rational and moral beings.[1] But the precisely similar expressions in *Genesis* v. 1 and v. 3: "In the likeness of God made he him (Adam)." "And Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image," make it difficult to exclude the idea of a corporeal resemblance.[2] Probably P has reproduced a feature of the ancient tradition, of which the use of the plural in *Genesis* i. 26 is another sign, and has not fully thought out his own position with regard to it. He has, however, provided "a general formula which we are at liberty to use in the light of the Christian revelation."[3]

### (c) The Psalter.

The idea which is conveyed by the prophets and the Priestly narrator in didactic form is expressed by the Psalmists in the language of devotion. The Psalter is best considered here in this review of the movement of thought subsequent to Deutero-Isaiah, for even if we do not hold, with Cheyne, "the post-Exilic date of every part of the Psalter to have been abundantly proved,"[4] we know that its editing and re-editing continued far into post-Exilic times, in order to adapt it to the needs of the community.

The Psalmists' doctrine of God is maintained at the level of Deutero-Isaiah and the Priestly document, and this doctrine reaches us invested with all the warmth of living religion.

That Yahwe is the one God needs no proof for the Psalmists,[5] and the author of *Psalm* cxv pours scorn on the idols of the heathen quite in the manner of Deutero-Isaiah. Yahwe is God from everlasting to everlasting;[6] the earth is his and the fullness thereof.[7]

There is no formal doctrine of creation in the *Psalms*,

[1] E.g. Kautzsch in *H.D.B.*, v. 716.
[2] So Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[3] Bennett: *Century Bible*, "Genesis," p. 84.
[4] *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, p. 124.
[5] Cf. Ps. xviii. 31, [6] Ps. xc. 2. [7] Ps. xxiv. 1.

but the eighth clearly shows the influence of P's creation story, and throughout them all the supremacy of God over nature is proclaimed.[1]

In human history he is equally supreme,[2] and also in the sphere of individual conduct, which he regulates and judges by his law.[3]

A certain amount of mythological matter is incorporated in some of the *Psalms*, e.g. lxxiv. 13 and civ. 26, which refer to Leviathan, the great dragon of the abyss, but it is no more than poetical embellishment such as might be found in modern poets.

Anthropomorphism is very frequent, sometimes unconscious, sometimes deliberately employed as poetic imagery,[4] sometimes jarring painfully upon a modern ear.[5] This feature may seem to show a falling back from the austere language of P, but what is lost in theological purism is more than compensated for by the enhanced sense of the living and active personality of God. Most of these anthropomorphisms in no way endanger the spirituality of the conception of the divine nature, and even modern Christian devotion finds itself unable to dispense with similar expressions.

The same might be said of the frequent mention of Yahwe's heavenly dwelling-place,[6] or of his abode in Zion.[7] Heaven is his throne, and Zion the place of his manifestation, but his essential being is not limited to either.[8] The most spiritual of all the *Psalms* is cxxxix: God is everywhere, and he knows everything.

Is the full doctrine of God's universalism contained in the Psalter? At first sight it would seem so. The nations are continually called upon to praise Yahwe, as though they equally with Israel were his people.[9] But there is usually the parallel thought of the pre-eminence of Zion and of Israel. The idea of God seldom escapes altogether from nationalism.

Unlike P, the *Psalms* contain many references to

[1] Cf. specially Pss. xix, xxiv, xxix, civ.
[2] Cf. Pss. lviii, lxxx, cxxxv.
[3] Cf. Pss. i, xix, cxix.
[4] Ps. lxxvi. 7, lxxvii. 19 f.
[5] Ps. ii. 4, lxxviii. 65.
[6] Ps. xi. 4, xiv. 2, xx. 6, etc.
[7] Cf. Ps. xx, 2, l. 2, lxviii. 17, etc.
[8] Cf. *supra*, p. 118.
[9] Pss. ix. 11, xviii. 49, xlviii. 10, lvii. 9, xcvi, cv. 1, cviii. 3; and cf. Pss. xxii. 27 f, xlvii. 1, xlvii. 7–10, lxvii, lxxxvi. 9 f., lxxxvii, cii. 15–28.

angels, and some few to demons. The latter are doubtless due to the survival of folk-lore, and are hardly to be regarded as an integral part of the Psalmists' thought,[1] while the former, in some cases, come near to poetic personifications of the divine activities. Thus it is said: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him." [2] "For he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." [3] "God maketh winds his angels, and flaming fire his ministers." [4] Elsewhere the angels are the attendants of God's throne, the worshippers in his heavenly temple.[5]

Distinguished from the angels (Hebrew *mal'ākîm*)[6] are what Kautzsch calls "under-gods" (*bĕnê 'ĕlōhîm*).[7] These *bĕnê 'ĕlōhîm* are not "sons of gods" in our sense, but according to Hebrew idiom "those who belong to the category of *'ĕlōhîm*." We should certainly read in *Psalm* lviii. 1: "Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O ye gods?" [8] and probably refer the term to the deities of heathen nations. The same meaning should be given to *Psalm* lxxxii. 6, where the *'ĕlōhîm* or *bĕnê 'ĕlōhîm* ("sons of the highest") are addressed, and threatened with death after the manner of men, because of the injustice and partiality of their rule. These two passages determine the interpretation of *'ĕlōhîm* in *Psalms* lxxxvi. 8, xcv. 3, xcvi. 4, xcvii. 7, xcvii. 9, cxxxv. 5, cxxxviii. 1; and of *bĕnê 'ĕlōhîm* in *Psalms* xxix. 1, lxxxix. 6 They are the "undergods" of the heathen nations over whom Yahwe is exalted.

The idea is manifestly inconsistent with the monotheism which prevails in the post-Exilic period, and would certainly have been rejected by P, but it must be remembered that the Psalter is a book of popular devotion, and that in modern hymn-books much obsolete theology survives, which would not be tolerated in dogmatic treatises.

[1] Ps. xci. 6, cvi. 37.
[2] Ps. xxxiv. 7.
[3] Ps. xci. 11. Cf. lxxviii. 49.
[4] Ps. civ. 4.
[5] Ps. ciii. 20, cxlviii. 2.
[6] מַלְאָכִים.
[7] בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים, or more briefly אֱלֹהִים or אֵלִים. *Vide* Kautzsch in *H.D.B.*, v. 724.
[8] Pointing אֵלֵם instead of MT אִלֵּם.

Kautzsch (*H.B.D.*, v. 724 *b*) argues that it is impossible to regard the idea as "a survival of the once prevailing Henotheism or even of a former Polytheism." If this means that the Psalmists themselves felt no inconsistency between this idea of under-gods and their monotheistic faith, he is probably right; but the idea itself *is* a survival of Henotheism. Numerous passages in the older literature prove that the Israelites, even "orthodox" ones, believed in the existence of the gods of other peoples, though they themselves worshipped Yahwe only.[1] The idea survived as late as *Deuteronomy* in the highest circle of thought,[2] and was, no doubt, eliminated very slowly from popular belief. Nor would it seem incredible to many of those who used the Psalms in post-Exilic worship. The statement of Kautzsch appears in fact to be too sweeping in its denial, disregarding, as it does, the facility with which the human mind holds inconsistent beliefs.

Varied views of the moral character of God are taken in the Psalter. In *Psalm* xviii. 25 we meet with a comparatively low one, according to which man finds just such a God as he deserves to find. But ordinarily God is above all human imperfections: "Righteousness and equity are the foundation of his throne."[3] He rules the whole world, and not Israel alone, in equity.[4] His love and mercy, long-suffering and faithfulness, hold a large place in the Psalmists' praises.[5] He is One who may be trusted to the uttermost, though the very foundations of the social order are shaken.[6]

The idea of God's moral character is, however, not yet perfect. He still hates his enemies,[7] and the Psalmists do not scruple to offer their own revengeful prayers to him.[8] Only once or twice does he show himself as Father. He is once called "the Father of the fatherless";[9] once he is said to pity them that fear him, "like as a father pitieth his children";[10] but we are still far removed from the mind of Jesus. The distance between God and man is only partially annulled, for the very thought of fatherly pity is linked with that of the infinite

[1] E.g. Judg. xi. 24; 1 Sam. xxvi. 19; 2 Kings i. 3.
[2] Cf. Deut. iv. 19. [3] Ps. lxxxix. 14. [4] Ps. ix. 8.
[5] E.g. Pss. lxxxvi. 15, ciii. 8 ff., cxi. 4, cxxxvi.
[6] Ps. xi. [7] Ps. xi. 5. [8] Pss. lviii, lix, xci.
[9] Ps. lxviii. 5. [10] Ps. ciii. 13.

contrast between the human and the divine: "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth we are dust." [1]

The doctrine of retribution dominates the ethical outlook of the Psalmists, and provides the one problem upon which they speculate, namely how to reconcile God's justice thus conceived with the facts of life. *Psalms* xxxvii and lxxiii reach a somewhat facile solution by way of a practical denial of the problem. Their answer is: "Wait a little, and you will see that prosperity *is* in proportion to desert." The honour of facing the facts, if not of finding their solution, was left for the authors of *Job* and *Ecclesiastes*.

Some of the Psalmists certainly rise above the level of ritual religion. *Psalm* l denounces the severance of religion from morality, and speaks with scorn of a material view of sacrifice. That the writer should think it necessary to denounce such a view shows how the old ideas of the divine nature persisted among the people. More to our present purpose, however, is *Psalm* cxix, 108, where the writer asks acceptance for the free-will offerings of his mouth, or *Psalm* lxix,[2] which declares that thanksgiving and the praise of God's name with a song will please him better than an offering of ox or bullock. *Psalms* xl and li [3] apparently repudiate sacrifice altogether: "Thou delightest not in sacrifice: thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering." Many of the Psalms, indeed, express reverence for the Temple and joy in its beautiful services;[4] but it is significant that the altar sacrifices are very seldom referred to.[5] The conclusion would appear to be that while the Psalmists in general did not reject the public sacrifices for the congregation, they preferred to direct private devotions into other channels. In this respect, then, the Psalter seems to take a more truly spiritual view of God than does the Priestly document.

[1] Ps. ciii. 14.
[2] Ps. lxix. 30 f
[3] xl. 6, li. 16.
[4] E.g. Pss. v, xxvi, xxvii, xliii, lxv, lxxxiv, cxvi, cxxii.
[5] Cf. Ps. xx. 3, liv. 6, lxvi. 13, cxviii. 27, cxli. 2. These seem to be the only certain instances.

### (*d*) The Wisdom Literature.

The Wisdom Literature (*Job*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Ecclesiasticus*, *Wisdom*) belongs in its present form to the late post-Exilic period, and *Wisdom* may fall within the first century A.D. The idea of God in it coincides in its main outlines with that of the Priestly document and the Psalter.

In the poetical portion of the book of *Job* we attain the highest level of Old Testament theology. The author is not only a strict monotheist, but his belief is so settled that he attributes it to non-Israelites like Job and his friends. The description of God's power in nature and in history [1] reminds us of those of Deutero-Isaiah; but while in the prophet they are part of a sustained polemic against heathenism and idolatry, in *Job* the doctrine of God's omnipotence is so securely won that the conflict is forgotten. The high doctrine of God's creative power is found not only in the speeches of Yahwe, but throughout the book, and is assumed as common ground by all the speakers. Further, the same confidence of his belief in the one almighty God makes it possible for the poet to interweave the old Babylonian mythology with his own symbolism without fear that he may be misunderstood in a polytheistic sense. The story of Marduk's triumph over the Chaos-monster is for the author of *Job* imagery which he uses with a master's hand for the vivid portrayal of his sure conviction of the supremacy of God.[2]

It is on the ethical side of the idea of God that the poet displays his originality. The debate turns upon the character of God's moral government. Job's friends are typical upholders of the prevailing dogma that God's government is strictly retributive, so that prosperity and happiness invariably follow piety and virtue, while misfortune is the consequence of sin. Against this dogma Job protests, and destroys it by confronting it with the facts of experience. Nevertheless, Job holds fast to his faith in the ultimate reasonableness and justice of

[1] Cf. Job, chaps. xxxviii-xli.
[2] Cf. Job iii. 8, ix. 13, xxvi. 12 f., xxxviii. 31.

God, and charges his friends with dishonouring him by their special pleading.[1] He never lets go that faith, though orthodoxy and the very facts of life seem to deny it. "So Job appeals from the God of dogmatism and of a yet incomprehensible experience to the true God of his faith."[2]

In one sense no solution is given of the problem of the suffering of the righteous in a divinely ordered world; but we are lifted up above the level of questionings into the region where the thought of self is lost in adoring contemplation of the majesty of God and his inscrutable wisdom in creation. Yet, as we read Job's speeches and take in their impression as a whole, we feel that it is the God who is revealed in his own heart who is the very God for him. Implanted there is the idea of a righteous Judge and a loving Friend,[3] and the poignancy of the situation is in the conflict between that idea and the current doctrine, still more between the idea and the facts of life, between the God of faith and the God of present experience.

But Job holds fast to his idea: the revelation within him is not finally to be darkened by any veil of dogma or of external happenings. Job solves his personal problem by a venture of faith in the ultimate justice and goodness of God. The faith is all the more precious in its witness to the sublimity of Job's idea of God in that it is really unsupported by the hope of compensation for present suffering in a future life, or the vision of a purpose fulfilled by the vicarious suffering of the righteous such as emerges in the Servant Songs. Job's faith is trust in the God revealed within him; and thus the book in an age of legalism stands in the true prophetic succession.

The Prologue of *Job*[4] stands on a lower level of thought. Probably it is based on an old folk-tale, and embodies popular beliefs; but it raises the question of the poem:

[1] Job xiii. 1 ff.

[2] "So appelliert Hiob von dem Gott der Dogmatik und der noch unverstandenen Wirklichkeit an den wahren Gott seines Glaubens." Marti: *Gesch. der Isr. Rel.*, p. 264.

[3] Cf. specially xvi. 19, xix. 25.

[4] Chaps. i, ii.

whether God or the Satan has the true conception of religion, whether religion rests on the inner personal trust of man in God, or whether its ground is only this: that man draws profit from his piety.[1]

The significance of the Satan in the Prologue has already been referred to,[2] and need not be discussed again. The doctrine of angels is not carried much further. There are still no good and evil angels as such, and their description as God's "holy ones"[3] has no ethical significance. "Heavenly ones" would be indeed a better rendering. One new feature appears possibly in chap. v. 1, and probably in chap. xxxiii. 23—in the speech of Elihu, a later addition. In these two passages the angels appear to act as intercessors between God and man. The thought is, however, not central in the poet's mind, and seems, in fact, inconsistent with the immediacy of the relation between God and man which is maintained elsewhere in the book.

To sum up: the idea of God in *Job*, while the same in its intellectual form as that of Deutero-Isaiah, is suffused with such moral feeling, and grasped with such faith, that it brings us appreciably nearer to the mind, or rather to the heart, of Christ. We may probably see the influence of the universalism of the Servant Songs in the fact that *Job*, an ideally righteous man, whom Yahwe describes as "my servant," is not a Jew.

*Ecclesiastes* faces the same moral problem as *Job*—God's government of the world. The "Grundschrift"[4] of the book attacks with equal force the orthodox doctrine of retribution: "There is a righteous man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his evil doing."[5] But Qoheleth (apart from his glossators) has no alternative theory to offer. His own doctrine is an unrelieved pessimism quite un-Israelitish in its character and possibly due to Greek influence. He will not deny the wisdom of God, but the conclusion which he preaches is not the submissive

[1] Cf. Marti, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
[2] *Vide supra*, pp. 122 f.
[3] Job v. 1.
[4] See Siegfried in *H.K.*, pp. 6 ff.
[5] Eccles. vii. 15. Cf. viii. 9 f., 14, ix. 2 f.

and believing reconciliation of oneself to the incomprehensible ways of God, but a fatalistic subjection beneath his unalterable decree.[1]

Such faith as Qoheleth has is monotheistic ;[2] but his contribution to doctrine is a negative one. He is evidence that a mind resolutely determined to see facts as they are could find no satisfaction in the theories of the Law or in his own wisdom. Faith and reason alike seem to fail him. The author of *Job* had held fast to faith when reason failed ; it remained for Jesus to bring the gift of a reasonable faith to those who felt the insufficiency of a legal religion or an intellectual philosophy.

The sages to whom we owe *Proverbs* are unconscious of, or indifferent to, the bitter problems which vexed Job and Qoheleth. They occupy the same standpoint as the Psalmists with regard to the doctrine of retribution : " for the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. But the wicked shall be cut off from it, and they that deal treacherously shall be rooted out of it."[3] The morality of the sages is for the most part of a pedestrian type, but " to call their wisdom either secular, or, in a modern sense, utilitarian, would be a mistake."[4] Not a few passages reveal a genuine religious fervour. The fear of Yahwe is the most important thing in wisdom (*re'shith da'ath*),[5] and this fear is no slavish cringing before a tyrant, but akin to the " knowledge of the Holy One "—a sonlike fear.

The precepts of the sages are concerned throughout with the duties of morality proper, not with the cultus, and, indeed, righteousness is declared to be better than sacrifice,[6] quite in the spirit of the eighth-century prophets.[7]

We may feel sure that the idea of God in the minds of the authors of *Proverbs* did not fall below that of the Priestly redactor of the Law or that of the Psalmists ;

[1] Cf. Marti, *op. cit.*, p. 267.
[2] Cf. Eccles. iii. 11, vi. 10, viii. 17.
[3] Prov. ii. 21 f. Cf. x. 25, xi. 21, 31, xiii. 9, 21 f., xiv. 11, xxiv. 20, etc
[4] Cheyne : *Religious Life after the Exile*, p. 139.
[5] רֵאשִׁית דַּעַת Prov. i. 7, 29, ix. 10. Cf. *B.D.B.*, *sub. voc.*
[6] Prov. xxi. 3.
[7] E.g. Hos. vi. 6.

but from the nature of their writings it lies in the background, and does not become an object of their speculation.[1]

*Ecclesiasticus* speaks of God as Almighty,[2] Everlasting,[3] and exalted beyond all power of human description.[4] All things and the hearts of all men are known to him.[5] Here and there in the book occurs the thought that the Lord is the God of all peoples; and the author, Ben Sira, prays: "Let them—the nations—know thee, as we also have known thee, that there is no God but only thou, O God."[6]

> The book of *Tobit* is probably of about the same date as *Ecclesiasticus*, and its author looks forward to the day when "all nations shall turn to fear the Lord God truly, and shall bury their idols."[7]

Ben-Sira addresses God as "Father and Master of my life,"[8] and affirms of the benevolent man that he will be as "a son to the Most High, and he shall love thee more than thy mother doth."[9] But it can hardly be said that we meet with a real doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, or of love as the essence of his nature. Ben-Sira is in sure possession of the orthodox monotheism of his age, but he does little to deepen or to widen the idea of God.

One curious expression of his thought must be referred to: "The sum of our words is, He is all."[10] This looks like a statement of pantheism, but the whole tone of the book forbids our taking the expression in such a sense. It is rather an unhappy paraphrase of the preceding verse: "By his word all things consist." The Old Latin version, therefore, gives a right explanation: "Ipse est in omnibus."[11]

[1] Cf. the description of the functions of the sage in Ecclesiasticus, chap. xxxix.
[2] xlii. 17, l. 14, 17.
[3] xxxix. 20.
[4] xliii. 30.
[5] xxiii. 19 f., xvii. 19 f., xxxix. 19.
[6] Ecclus. xxxvi. 5. Cf. xviii. 13, xliv. 21.
[7] Tobit xiv. 6. Cf. xiii. 11.
[8] Ecclus. xxiii. 1. Cf. xxiii. 4.
[9] Ecclus. iv. 10.
[10] Ecclus. xliii. 27.
[11] Cf. Wicks: *Doctrine of God in the Apocryphal and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 34, and the literature there cited.

The latest of the writings of the sages in pre-Christian times is the *Wisdom of Solomon*. Some, indeed, e.g. Kuenen, would bring it within the first century A.D. It touches Christian thought in teaching that the essence of the divine nature is love: "Thou lovest all things that are . . . for never wouldest thou have formed anything if thou didst hate it . . . but thou sparest all things, because they are thine, O Sovereign Lord, thou lover of men's lives." [1] This is a nearer approach to the thought of Jesus than any we have yet discovered. Further, in a reasoned discourse upon idolatry,[2] which has reminiscences of Deutero-Isaiah, the author argues that the Gentiles are sinners, not because they are not of Abraham's race, but because they are without the knowledge of the true God. The argument takes us beyond the narrow bounds of nationalism.

But on the other hand, God is Father only in relation to Israel; to the rest he is but King.[3] Moreover, the old doctrine of retribution, which Job and Qoheleth had found wanting, is maintained in an uncompromising fashion, and is developed into a theory that the heaven-sent punishments of sinners are made to fit the crime.[4] The advance of thought in the book is, therefore, by no means uniform.

In the discussion of the Wisdom Literature we have not yet touched upon the central theme, wisdom itself; but it is of great importance in the sages' idea of God. While they assume with all the post-Exilic writers that there is one God, perfect in power, in knowledge, and in holiness, they single out for contemplation one divine attribute in and for itself, viz. wisdom. This fact is significant for our understanding of the religious temper of one section at least of Israel's thinkers. It is the *power* of God which first makes impression on the minds of men; then, with a wider experience of social relationships, his *righteousness*; at last, a reflective age, surveying the world without and within, is filled with wonder and adoration at the thought of his *wisdom*.

[1] Wisd. of Sol. xi. 24, 26.
[2] Chaps. xiii, xiv.
[3] Wisd. of Sol. xi. 9 f.
[4] xi. 6 f., 15, xv. 18, xvi, 1.

The term wisdom has a wide range in the Hebrew language. It includes skill in technical work or in warfare ; [1] efficiency in administration ; [2] shrewdness in practical affairs or in debate ; [3] as well as ethical and religious wisdom. In God wisdom is the quality in virtue of which he knows and purposes and plans all things, and, in the developed thought of the sages, it includes his moral attributes. Thus : wisdom "walks in the way of righteousness," [4] and is "beneficent, loving towards men, stedfast, sure, and free from care." [5]

There is an increase in the complexity of the idea as we pass from *Job* to *Wisdom* through *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiasticus*. In *Job* xxviii the writer extols in gorgeous imagery the inestimable value of wisdom, whose place none but God himself knoweth. He "understandeth the way thereof, and knoweth the place thereof." [6] At the creation "when he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder, then did he see it, and declare it, he established, yea, and searched it out." [7]

*Proverbs* [8] goes far beyond this. Wisdom is now personified. She cries to men to receive her instruction ; she is the guide of kings, princes, and judges. She was created by God in the beginning,[9] and "when he marked out the foundations of the earth," then she was with him and was "daily his delight, sporting always before him" "like a child." [10] Cheyne remarks on these last verses : "The universe is, as Emerson has expressed it, a 'divine improvization' ; its architect is 'the Eternal Child.' Surely this is one of the very finest conceptions in the Old Testament. It stands there quite alone ; but . . . the ideal thus expressed cannot be safely disregarded by those who would have a joyous as well as a deeply thoughtful religion." [11]

[1] Exod. xxviii. 3 ; Isa. x. 13.
[2] Deut. xxxiv. 9 ; 1 Kings ii. 6.
[3] 2 Sam. xx. 22 ; 1 Kings iv. 30.
[4] Prov. viii. 20.
[5] Wisd. of Sol. vii. 23.
[6] Job xxviii. 23.
[7] Job xxviii. 26 f.
[8] Chap. viii.
[9] Prov. viii. 22.
[10] Prov. viii. 29 f. Reading אָמוֹן, "alumnus," for אָמוֹן, "master-workman."
[11] *Religious Life after the Exile*, p. 155.

In *Ecclesiasticus* [1] Jewish nationalism tends to narrow the magnificent conception. Wisdom, "which cometh forth from the mouth of the Most High," pervades all creation, indeed, but she has her permanent dwelling in Israel, and even seems to be identified with the Law. "In the holy tabernacle I ministered before him; and so was I established in Sion." "All these things are the book of the covenant of the Most High God, even the law which Moses commanded us." [2]

In *Wisdom*,[3] however, the ideal regains its universal scope. Wisdom is the "artificer of all things" [4] and "reacheth from one end of the world to the other with full strength, and ordereth all things graciously." [5] The attributes of Wisdom are, in fact, those of God himself, for she is "all-powerful, all-surveying." She is a "breath of the power of God; and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty." [6]

In these last three books Wisdom is personified in the most vivid terms. Are the writers using a well-known literary figure for the sake of poetical effect? Or do they actually hypostatize wisdom?

No doubt the terms, if they were logically pressed by Western readers, would imply a distinct personal existence; but Oriental imagery goes much farther than Western standards would allow, and it is hardly to be thought that the writers made any personal distinction within or without the divine being.

A recent commentator [7] holds that "the writer of *Wisdom* regards her as far more than a merely literary personification; he conceded to her a refined, supersensuous personality." This statement seems to go too far. It must be remembered that psychology was then in its infancy, and terms might be used with a latitude now impossible. The personification of wisdom is an attempt to reconcile the transcendence of God with the fact of his living and active presence in the world of nature and in the minds of men. What the later prophets,

[1] Chap. xxiv.
[2] Ecclus. xxiv. 10, 23.
[3] Chap. vii.
[4] Wisd. of Sol. vii. 22.
[5] Wisd. of Sol. viii. 1.
[6] Wisd. of Sol. vii. 25.
[7] Gregg: *Commentary on Wisdom*, pp. 35 f.

e.g. Ezekiel and Zechariah, sought to achieve by the introduction of angel intermediaries, the sages accomplished in more philosophic fashion by the personification of the divine wisdom. Both prophets and sages are striving to convey their sense of God's immanence in creation, while holding fast to the cardinal doctrine of his transcendence.

More strictly analogous to this conception of Wisdom are those of the Spirit and the Word of God. His Word is personified in the Old Testament,[1] and in the Targums the tendency is to attribute to the Word (*Memra*) all actions which in the Scriptures are assigned to God himself.[2] A similar process is seen with respect to the Spirit ; [3] but the relative independence of the Word and the Spirit is not such as would warrant our ascribing to either a distinct personal existence within or apart from the Godhead.

No doubt the personification of the Spirit, the Word, and the Wisdom of God helped under the influence of Greek philosophy to determine the form of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity ; but the idea of God in Israel did not admit any distinction of hypostases within it. Hebrew psychology was not, indeed, sufficiently advanced in its analysis of the concept of personality to recognize the possibility of such distinctions.

### (*e*) The Apocalyptic Writings.

We have finally to consider the movement of thought between Deutero-Isaiah and the times of Jesus as illustrated in the Apocalyptic literature, which begins with *Daniel* in the middle of the second century B.C.,[4] and is continued in the composite book of *Enoch*,[5] the book of *Jubilees*,[6] the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,[7] and other works of less importance.

Apocalyptic has not left any strong permanent mark

[1] Cf. Ps. xxxiii. 6, cvii. 20, cxlvii. 15 ; Isa. lv. 10 f.
[2] Cf. Edersheim : *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. i p. 47.
[3] Gen. i. 2 ; Isa. xi. 2.
[4] *Circa* 165.
[5] 170–64 B.C.
[6] 135–115 B.C.
[7] 109–107 B.C.

on later Judaism, and in Israel it succumbed to the legalistic type of Pharisaism after the final dissolution of the state; but it is not fair to call it a "back-water of thought," for the popularity of its teaching in the first century B.C. and A.D. is attested by the number and variety of its documents and the translation of them into different languages. They are found in Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, Armenian, Ethiopic, and Slavonic.

The contributions which Apocalyptic made to thought are in the main eschatological, but the eschatology could not fail to re-act in some degree upon the fundamental conceptions of religion, and in particular upon the doctrine of God. Indeed, the primary assumption of the eschatology—that God intervenes in the world by catastrophic action—differentiates Apocalyptic from the older prophecy, as it does from modern views. The notion that God works through a cataclysm leads ultimately to a sort of dualism—the present world is wholly evil, and the reign of God can be established only in a new heaven and a new earth. One of the writers sums up the general impression produced by the literature thus: "The Lord God made not one world but two." [1] It is as though there were "two opposed universes"—"the universe of righteousness under the rule of God and the universe of sin under the lordship of Satan." [2]

Upon the whole, however, it may be said (this important reservation once made) that the apocalypses maintain the lofty presentation of the idea of God which had been reached in the latter prophets and in the Priestly Code.[3] The unity, omnipotence, and omnipresence of God are assumed by all the books, and in most of them expressly asserted, while titles of reverence and honour are multiplied.[4] The idea of God's spirituality is safeguarded, not only by explicit statements, but also by a

[1] 2 (4) Esdras vii. 50.
[2] H. T. Andrews, in Peake's *Commentary*, p. 434.
[3] Cf. Fairweather, article "Development of Doctrine," *H.D.B.*, pp 276 f.
[4] Enoch i. 3, xxv. 3, ix. 5, xiv. 22; T. Judah xx. 3. Cf. for titles the index to Charles's edition of *Enoch*.

growing tendency towards the disuse of highly anthropomorphic terms.[1]

But the gap between God and man tends to widen, and into it is introduced a hierarchy of angels to serve as mediators between God and his creation.

Some modern Jewish writers protest against this view. For example, Dr. J. Abelson says:[2] "There is nothing more harassing in reading the opinion of the average Christian theologian than the ever-recurring taunt that the Jewish theological teachers of Old Testament as well as New Testament times confined their horizon wholly and solely to the transcendence of God." Wicks thinks that there is ground for this complaint, and after his exhaustive study of the literature concludes that, apart from certain exceptions (e.g. *Enoch* 1–36), "of the rest of our authors it may be said truly that to them God was nigh at hand and not far off."[3]

Wicks supports his conclusion by many references to the books, e.g. *Testament of Reuben* i. 7; *Testament of Naphtali* vi. 8; *Testament of Joseph* iii. 3, iv. 8, vii. 4; *Testament of Gad* v. 9, vii. 1; *Enoch* xlvii. 1, etc.; but in considering the religious teaching of any author or series of authors, we must have regard not only to the catalogue of ideas, but also to the relative emphasis upon them, and the presence or absence of counteracting ideas. No candid student is likely to maintain that the apocalyptists "confined their horizon wholly and solely to the transcendence of God," but as little likely is he to deny that the writers of *Jubilees* and *Enoch* present God as deputing authority to angels, and that in *Enoch* 1–36 the Creator is depicted as distant from all mankind, reigning from heaven, and governing the world by angelic viceroys.[4] Such representations lend colour to the assertion of Fairweather that "in the Apocalyptic literature God is thought of as occupying an inaccessible throne."[5]

Both strains of thought are undoubtedly present—

[1] Cf. Wicks: *The Doctrine of God in the Apocryphal and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 121.
[2] *Hibbert Journal*, January 1912.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 126.
[4] Enoch ix. 2, ix. 11, x. 4, xv. 2.
[5] *Background of the Gospels*, p. 208.

the one emphasizing the nearness, the other the remoteness of God—and the judgement as to which of them predominates must be largely subjective; but in so far as Apocalyptic, pointing to the cataclysm of the future, gives a direction to thought, it seems to be towards the transcendence of God and his withdrawal from direct present contact with the world of men.

Hence, although the righteousness of God is constantly recognized, and a judgement upon the wicked confidently expected, there are few references to the fatherly love of God. The *Testaments*, indeed, speak of God's love in a number of places,[1] but it is a love for the righteous only, not for sinners; and of the persistent wrongdoer it is said: "The Lord shall hate him."[2]

The book of *Jubilees* is equally harsh in its language about sinners, who "will be recorded in the heavenly tables as adversaries, and they will be destroyed out of the book of life."[3] The author, however, regards God as the loving Father of righteous Israelites: "I shall be their Father, and they will be my children, and they will all be called children of the living God, and every angel and every spirit will know that these are my children, and that I am their Father in uprightness and righteousness, and that I love them."[4] "All will know that I am the God of Israel and the Father of all the children of Jacob."[5]

Charles, in his edition of *Jubilees*, p. 7, and Fairweather[6] both say that the Israelites are called God's children in virtue of their physical descent from Jacob; but although the author is narrow enough in his nationalism, the first of the two passages quoted must mean more than this, and it appears to make moral likeness as well as physical descent the ground of sonship.

The *Testaments* speak of the love of God, as we have already seen, but it is not a love which extends to sinners in fatherly fashion. The *Enoch* writers seem to be silent on the subject. In the third book of the *Sibylline Oracles*, which is of Jewish origin, God is described by

[1] T. Iss. i. 1; T. Naph. viii. 4; T. Jos. i. 4, etc.
[2] T. Naph. viii. 6. [3] Jub. xxx. 21 f. [4] Jub. i. 24 f.
[5] Jub. i. 28. [6] *H.D.B.*, v. 277.

the remarkable title "All-Father,"[1] but elsewhere in the same book his love is restricted to Israel only.[2]

The doctrine that all men alike are the objects of God's care, and that he is to be served and worshipped universally, finds some recognition in Apocalyptic writings.

The *Sibylline Oracles* exalt Israel as a royal tribe, but yet they call God "the Immortal Sire of all men," and anticipate the day when "all the islands and the cities" will call upon God, and go to the Temple, abandoning idolatry.[3]

The writer of *Enoch* 1–36 teaches, indeed, that the chosen race is "the best part of mankind," but he also represents God as saying: "All the children of men shall become righteous, and all nations shall offer me adoration and praise, and shall worship me."[4]

The large-hearted author of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* approaches more nearly than any other of the Jewish writers of the second and first centuries B.C. to the universalism of the Servant Songs. In the *Testament of Levi* he looks for a Priest in whose days "the Gentiles shall be multiplied in knowledge upon the earth and enlightened through the grace of the Lord."[5] Again we read: "All the peoples shall glorify the Lord for ever";[6] and "His name shall be in every place of Israel and among the Gentiles";[7] and "He shall save Israel and all the Gentiles."[8]

Nowhere, indeed, do we meet again the sublime conception of the Servant Songs that Israel is a missionary people, ordained of God to serve and suffer for the Gentiles; but it may be affirmed that in the centuries between the Exile and the ministry of Jesus there were always some in Israel who, amid much particularism and nationalism, upheld the idea that the one God is the God of all men equally, and that his mercy is over all his works.[9]

[1] iii. 550.
[2] 710 f. See *E.Bi.*, pp. 245–250 and *D.C.G.*, p. 84.
[3] *Sib. Or.*, Bk. iii. ll. 715–720. Cf. Wicks, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
[4] Enoch x. 21.
[5] T. Levi xviii. 9.
[6] T. Judah xxv. 5.
[7] T. Dan vi. 7.
[8] T. Asher vii. 3.
[9] Cf. Wicks, *op. cit.*, pp. 168 f.

### Conclusions.

Here may be concluded this review of the modifications of the developed idea of God in post-Exilic times. The result of the study justifies the claim made above that in *Deutero-Isaiah* (if the Servant Songs are included) the theology of Israel is found in its mature expression. In the succeeding centuries creative thinkers are rare. Monotheism, once gained, is held fast ; idolatry is impossible within the community which sprung from the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. There is much reflexion on the attributes of God, especially his justice and his wisdom. In the latter case discussion goes far, and uses language of increasing boldness, under the influence, perhaps, of Greek speculation.

The problem of God's justice produced the one great work of the period—the book of *Job*. The issue of its debates is more important for practical religion than for theology. The current doctrine of retribution is conclusively refuted, though it lived on with apparently unimpaired vitality. But no fresh intellectual solution of the problem is offered. Job bows down in resignation before the almighty power and inscrutable wisdom of the Creator, and holds fast to his faith in the just and good God who is revealed in his own heart. These discussions, in fact, enriched the content of the idea of God without greatly changing its outlines.

In the *Psalms* utterance is given to the emotions stirred by the idea of a God who is almighty, righteous, and loving unto Israel. But the universal range of God's love and his gracious purposes for all mankind are apprehended only sporadically in the literature. That noble vision of God's purpose to make Israel a missionary people to serve and suffer for the nations, which flashed for a moment before the eyes of the writer of the Servant Songs, vanishes and does not re-appear. Nationalism still prevails.

The conviction that God deals with the individual as well as with the nation becomes prominent in the Wisdom Literature ; but speaking generally, the distance between

the Creator and mankind widens in these centuries: his angels and his personified attributes execute his purposes, and there is little further advance towards the perception of the Fatherhood of God.

Our conclusion as to the outstanding position of the Deutero-Isaiah is confirmed by the evidence in the Gospels of the influence of his book upon Jesus himself. If we may judge by quotations and references, he meditated much upon this prophet, and discovered in him some of the principles by which he guided his own ministry. The *Psalms* also were often on his lips. Among the later books *Daniel* and *Enoch* may have provided a starting-point for his conception of the Son of Man, but it is penetrated through and through by the teaching of the Servant Songs. Of the other apocalyptic works it is only with regard to the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* that a good case can be made for a direct influence upon the mind of Jesus. In this book the bringing together of the two great commandments and the teaching on forgiveness which is given in the Sermon on the Mount are anticipated.[1]

Summary.

The fully developed prophetic idea of God was modified in detail during the period between 2 *Isaiah* and Jesus. (*a*) The post-Exilic prophets do not show much originality. Their doctrine is monotheistic. Only in a few places, e.g. in 3 *Isaiah*, is there any polemic against idolatry. That Yahwe is the one and only God is a doctrine fully secured. In a few passages an approach is made to the ideas of God's fatherhood and his universal care for all mankind, but usually nationalism is predominant. The doctrine of the Spirit of Yahwe is developed, but the Spirit is not conceived as personal. There is an increasing sense of the transcendence of God, and angels appear as intermediaries. A desire to exempt God from direct responsibility for evil may account for the introduction of the Satan in *Zechariah*.

(*b*) The Priestly Document gives in the Creation story a classic expression of the doctrine of monotheism, though *creatio ex nihilo* is not asserted. P makes no mention of angels, and avoids anthropomorphism.

(*c*) The Psalter expresses doctrine in the language of devotion.

[1] See Charles: *Testaments of Twelve Patriarchs*, pp. xcii ff., and *Religious Development between the Old and New Testaments*, pp. 153–158.

Usually the level of thought is that of 2 *Isaiah*. Anthropomorphism is frequent, sometimes unconscious, sometimes employed as poetic imagery. Such language adds vividness to the idea of God. There are many references to angels and a few to demons, the latter being a survival of folk-lore. Mention is also made of the *bĕnê 'ĕlōhîm* or under-gods, an idea not strictly consistent with monotheism. The Psalmists seldom escape altogether from nationalism. As to God's moral character various views are taken. His righteousness, his love and mercy, his faithfulness and long-suffering hold a large place, but he still hates his enemies, and hears the Psalmist's prayer for vengeance. Personal communion between God and man is a mark of the Psalter, but there are only one or two references to God as Father. The doctrine of retribution is strongly asserted. The Temple services are often referred to, but the sacrifices seldom, and in *Psalms* xl and li sacrifice is repudiated. Diversity of authorship in the Psalter precludes uniformity of doctrine.

(*d*) The idea of God in the Wisdom Literature coincides on the whole with that of P and the Psalter. *Job* shows originality in dealing with the ethical aspect of the idea. The doctrine of retribution is vehemently repudiated. Though no solution of the problem of the suffering of the righteous is reached, the author holds fast to faith in the ultimate justice and goodness of God in spite of appearance. *Ecclesiastes* faces the same moral problem, but its doctrine (apart from the glosses) is an unrelieved pessimism. Qoheleth is a monotheist, but his contribution to doctrine is a negative one. In *Proverbs* the orthodox theory of retribution is maintained. Religious fervour is not wanting, though it lies in the background. No reference is made to the cultus, and the service of God is shown to consist in the performance of moral duties. *Ecclesiasticus* speaks of God as almighty, everlasting, and beyond all human description. It hints at the fatherhood of God and his universal care for men. *Wisdom* teaches that the essence of the divine nature is love; but he is the Father of Israel only, while to the rest of mankind he is but King. The book maintains and elaborates the doctrine of retribution.

The central theme of the Wisdom Literature is wisdom itself. It is the quality in virtue of which God knows and purposes all things, and it includes his moral attributes. The idea increases in complexity as we pass from *Job* to *Wisdom* through *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiasticus*. In the last three books Wisdom is personified, but not actually hypostatized. The conception of Wisdom, like that of the Spirit and the Word of God, attempts to express the immanence of God, while safeguarding his transcendence.

(*e*) The Apocalyptic Literature is mainly eschatological, but the eschatology reacts upon the idea of God. The theory that God will bring to an end the present order by catastrophic action tends to a sort of dualism, but on the whole the doctrine of God is maintained at a high level. The gap between God and man tends to

widen, and a hierarchy of angels is introduced into it. There are but few references to the fatherhood of God, though some of the books speak of his love for the righteous. This love, however, does not extend to sinners. Nationalism usually prevails in this literature, but occasionally there is some recognition of universalism.

## CHAPTER III

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPHETIC IDEAS TRACED BACKWARD FROM DEUTERO-ISAIAH THROUGH EZEKIEL, JEREMIAH, AND DEUTERONOMY

THE attempt has now been made to show how the idea of God expressed in the pages of *Deutero-Isaiah* approximates in many points to the teaching of Jesus, and how in the intervening years Jewish thought, while holding the main outlines of the idea, at some points shaped it more closely according to the mind of Jesus, but at others, and those salient ones, accentuated the differences. The next stage of our inquiry will trace the idea backward through Israel's leading teachers towards the earliest form with regard to which we have direct or indirect information.

### EZEKIEL.

Deutero-Isaiah addressed his message to a community that had been long in exile. His nearest known predecessor in the line of prophets is Ezekiel, whose work began in the fifth year after the deportation of king Jehoiachin and the leading citizens of Jerusalem to Babylon,[1] and continued for some twenty years.

We count him here in the line of prophets, and seek in him elements of that doctrine which Jesus was to teach afterwards; but it must be borne in mind that he was also one of the fathers of legalism, and the substantial justice admitted of the description of him as "a priest in prophet's clothing." A priest he was by descent and by temperament, and, as he looks beyond the sin and

[1] 592 B.C.

misery of the present towards an ideal future, he sees not a national state but a priestly community, whose chief aim shall be the safeguarding, by ritual regulation, of the holiness of Yahwe in a holy land, and among a holy people.

But Ezekiel does more than wear the prophet's garb: he performs a prophet's function in proclaiming the character and will of God, and in appealing to the conscience of his people. He does not, indeed, make many specific declarations concerning the being and attributes of God. His two chief themes—the guilt of his people, and the new Israel whence the pollution of sin shall be banished—dominate his writings. Duhm, in fact, asserts that he brought no idea to prophecy.[1] But there is an originality in the fresh emphasis which he gives to the ideas which he inherited.

This is certainly the fact with regard to his constant insistence upon the *holiness* of God. To the Deutero-Isaiah Yahwe was the Holy One of Israel,[2] and the same title occurs earlier in the son of Amoz.[3] In both the term "holy" is ethical, and expresses the transcendental attributes of Yahwe, or that which we call Godhead as opposed to the human.[4] This is, however, not the original sense of "holiness." Its early use is in a sense mainly physical. "The holy," says Wellhausen, "is the prohibited." H. W. Robinson explains: "The earlier idea of 'holiness'—which, etymologically, may mean 'separation'—is that of inaccessibility, perilous and unknown power, involving mysterious taboos and superstitious fears. The idea is common to many peoples in their primitive stage, and has no essential connexion with the moral development of the idea of God." [5]

In *Ezekiel* there seems to be a blending of the moral and the physical sense. He speaks on the one hand of Yahwe's "holy" name,[6] and we are inclined to think

[1] Cf. *Israels Propheten*, pp. 227 ff.
[2] Cf. Isa. xli. 14, 16, 20, xliii. 3, 14, 15, etc.
[3] Cf. Isa. v. 19, xii. 6, xxix. 19.
[4] Cf. Davidson, *O.T. Theology*, p. 145.
[5] *Religious Ideas of the O.T.*, p. 69.
[6] Cf. xx. 39, xxxvi. 20 f., xxxix. 25, xliii. 7 f.

of the Holy One who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil"; [1] but we read more often of "holy" things, of the "holy" place, the "holy" mountain, and so forth.[2] We are thus carried back to quasi-physical ideas of "holiness" as a contagious quality, dangerous to acquire and dangerous to lose, inherent in things and persons brought into contact with Yahwe.

It would not be just, however, to interpret the "holy" name of Yahwe only in this non-moral sense. As Yahwe's requirements of men are ethical as well as ceremonial,[3] so his own character is ethical, and his "holiness" is his reaction against moral as well as physical defilement. Lofthouse, indeed, asserts that "in the mind of Ezekiel holiness sums up all physical, moral, and religious worth, and is the precise opposite of all that is mean and loathsome." [4] Here, perhaps, he gives a fuller content to the idea than the facts warrant; but he is nearer to the truth than those who minimize the ethical aspect of the divine holiness in the doctrine of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel's emphasis upon the transcendence of Yahwe is to be noted in the very frequent use of the phrase "son of man." It occurs over ninety times as Yahwe's term of address to the prophet. Undoubtedly it lays stress on the distance between the Godhead exalted in holiness and the prophet as mere man. Delitzsch, it is true, finds in the phrase a title of honour derived from a similar one in Babylonian use, meaning a "free man" or a "nobleman." [5] This, is, however, very unlikely, for the phrase is easily explicable from Hebrew usage, and in the context its use often follows Ezekiel's abasement before God ("then fell I on my face"), or precedes his address as one of a guilty and rebellious people.[6]

Yahwe's sovereignty over the nations is proclaimed by Ezekiel [7] in tones as loud as those of Deutero-Isaiah. He is bidden to prophesy against the nations—against Ammon, Moab, and Edom, against Tyre and Egypt and

[1] Hab. i. 12 f.
[2] Cf. xxii. 8, 26, xlii. 13, xliv. 8.
[3] See chaps. xviii, xxxiii.
[4] "Commentary on Ezekiel" in *Century Bible*, p. 36.
[5] *Babel und Bibel*, iii. 51 f.
[6] Cf. i. 28, ii. 1, ii. 3, 5, etc.
[7] ii. 3, etc.

the Philistines. Yahwe will smite them, and they shall know (says he) "That I am Yahwe"; [1] i.e. they shall know "my absolute omnipotence, my absolute sovereignty over all the peoples of the earth, my inviolable holiness." [2]

When König,[3] however, commenting on the four times repeated saying in chap. xxxv—"shall know that I am Yahwe"—asserts that this must mean "shall know that I am *their* God," he seems to go too far. Ezekiel is too narrowly nationalist to expect such a recognition of Yahwe by the heathen. They will know him as their Ruler, but that they should know him as their God implies a mutual interest which Ezekiel would be far from allowing. The attitude of the prophet towards foreign nations is, indeed, the most repellent feature of his book, and contrasts painfully with that of Deutero-Isaiah.

In the prophet's proclamation of the universal sovereignty of Yahwe monotheism is implicit, but there is no express statement such as we have in *Deutero-Isaiah*. The mind of Ezekiel is so fully filled with the glory of Yahwe that he seems not to reflect upon the gods of the heathen, nor to inquire whether they have any reality. He uses mythological subjects with some freedom,[4] and this, in one whose hatred of idolatry was so intense, may be a sign that heathen gods had no reality to his mind. Their idols were "stocks" [5] and nothing more.

Loisy says that Ezekiel seems to have made the gods into auxiliaries of Yahwe, and that the seven celestial beings [6] who carried out the destruction of Jerusalem might be the gods of the seven planets, and that the one with the ink-horn might be Nabu.[7] The comparison, however, seems far-fetched for one who must have seen the high officials of Nebuchadrezzar at the time of the deportation of Jehoiachin in 597 B.C.

The God of Ezekiel is more anthropomorphic than the God of Deutero-Isaiah or the Priestly document, but

[1] xxviii. 2, xxx. 19, xxxv. 4, etc.
[2] Cf. Kautzsch in *H.D.B.*, v. 702.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 391 *n.*
[4] E.g. xxviii. 11–19.
[5] גִּלּוּלִים.
[6] ix. 2.
[7] *Religion of Israel*, p. 198.

the prophet makes attempts—laboured ones sometimes—to avoid directly describing Yahwe as having human form. Upon the cherubic chariot he beholds "the *likeness* of a throne" and "the *likeness* as the *appearance* of a man upon it above."[1] Ezekiel has advanced beyond a naïve anthropomorphism, and is striving to adapt his terminology to his thought, but he is not yet able to conceive a purely spiritual being.

The moral character of Yahwe as depicted by Ezekiel is, if we may so speak, unattractive. No doubt in the allegory of chap. xvi the love of Yahwe for Israel is in the background—more we cannot say. And love breathes in the passionate pleading: "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, ye house of Israel?"[2] The prophet speaks also from time to time of God's free grace in the forgiveness of a repentant people,[3] and in their renewal by the gift of a new heart and spirit.[4] But Ezekiel's God can scarcely be called a God of love. We are pained by what seems like a tone of self-assertiveness in Yahwe's words, which seems incompatible with the supreme majesty of Godhead. When one oracle after another ends with the clause "that they may know that I am Yahwe,"[5] it seems as though the enhancement of his reputation were the sole end alike of his punishment and his mercy. So again, it pains us, when some gracious promise is followed by the reminder: "Not for your sakes do I this, but for mine own name's sake."[6] Nor is the impression quite removed, when we remember all that Yahwe's name meant to Ezekiel: it was not his mere reputation but his self-revelation as the supreme and only God.

The meeting of priest and prophet in the person of Ezekiel is shown in the catalogue he gives in chaps. xviii. and xxxiii. of Yahwe's requirements of the righteous man. Partly they are ethical, and recall the demands of the earlier prophets, but partly they allude to ritual obligations, and no distinction in value between the two kinds

[1] Ezek. i. 26.
[2] xxxiii. 11.
[3] xvi. 60 ff., xxxvii. 26.
[4] xi. 19, xxxvi. 26.
[5] xi. 10, xii. 16, etc.
[6] xxxvi. 22, 32.

of conduct is made. Yet the moral indignation of the prophet against sins of social wickedness is strong. The special charges he makes against Jerusalem are the perverting of justice, and deeds of violence and incest.[1] All classes are involved: the king, who violated the oath sworn to Nebuchadrezzar;[2] the princes, who are like ravening wolves;[3] the priests and the prophets.[4] All this guilt calls for God's vengeance, and pardon for the nation is impossible.[5]

Very important in Ezekiel's teaching is his insistence on the moral responsibility of the individual.[6] The solidarity of the family, which in times past had involved all in the guilt and punishment of one, is by him categorically denied. God deals with the individual as such. "I will judge you every one according to his ways, saith the Lord Yahwe."[7] "The soul that sinneth it shall die."[8] Every man has free-will, and can turn from evil to good. "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."[9] The doctrine is expressed in an exaggerated form, as is natural when the prophet is working out a new idea, and no account is taken of the power of habit, of which Jeremiah had already spoken.[10] Still, there is here an important advance in ethics, and concurrently in the conception of God's government of mankind.

In spite, however, of what has been called his "Pelagian" view of free-will,[11] Ezekiel is no mere moralist, who states the law and then leaves men to choose good or evil as they like. He regards the work of conversion, at least sometimes, as essentially divine. "I will give them one heart," says Yahwe, "and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and

[1] xxii. 6 ff., 10 ff.
[2] xvii. 12 ff.
[3] xxii. 6, xxii. 27, xxxiv. 1 ff.
[4] xxii. 8, xiii. 1 ff.
[5] xiv. 12 ff.
[6] Cf. chaps. xviii, xxxiii.
[7] xviii. 30.
[8] xviii. 20.
[9] xviii. 27.
[10] Jer. xiii. 23.
[11] Addis: *Hebrew Religion*, p. 227.

do them : and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." [1] Note, however, that even in this promise the legal bent appears in the mention of statutes and ordinances.[2]

So in his arraignment of the guilty nation it is the charge of idolatry which occupies the foreground. Israel's history has been one long apostasy.[3] And by idolatry Ezekiel does not mean the cult of foreign gods, but the whole cult of Yahwe himself also, in so far as it had been practised in the sacrificial worship of the high places, and with the use of images. From Egypt onwards Israel's worship had been idolatry,[4] at first under Egyptian, then under Canaanite forms.[5] Even the early legal codes seem to be included in the prophet's sweeping condemnation, and he affirms the strange doctrine, peculiar to himself, that Yahwe had punished the people by giving them statutes that were not good.[6] He refers specially to the command of *Exodus* xxii. 29 to give the first-born to Yahwe. Kautzsch [7] urges that " it is almost inconceivable that Ezekiel should have represented child-sacrifice as instituted by Yahwe himself for the purpose of destroying Israel " ; but the prophet's language is not so strange, if we remember the constant fusion of result and purpose in the Hebrew mind.

Kautzsch goes on to say : [8] " Perhaps he speaks of the command of *Exodus* xxii. 29 as ' not good ' simply because it gave occasion to the delusion that God demanded not only the dedication but the actual sacrifice of the first-born." The evidence of child-sacrifice in Canaan and among the Israelites is, however, too full to allow us to dismiss the literal interpretation of the command as a delusion. Ezekiel meant what he said, inconceivable as it may appear to us. To him the whole past is hopelessly corrupt, and he demands a complete break with it.

Stade delivers his opinion thus : " Ezekiel's conception of Israel's past as an evolution of error (Fehlentwicklung) betokens a complete severance from it, and the rejection of its ideals. Ezekiel has thereby given occasion to the incapacity of Judaism

[1] xi. 19 f. But contrast xviii. 31.
[2] Cf. Marti, *op. cit.*, p. 205.
[3] ii. 3, 5, v. 5 ff., etc.
[4] xxiii. 3, 8.
[5] xxiii. 3, 8, xvi. 3.
[6] xx. 25 ff.
[7] *H.D.B.*, v. 703.
[8] *Loc. cit.*

to understand the history of Israel, and to conceive itself as a product of this history." [1]

König objects on the ground that Ezekiel does not refer to *all* Israel.[2] But he does refer to Israel *as a whole*, and takes no account of exceptions. Further, says König, the ideals he disavows were foreign ones. But this is to assume the point at issue.

König's conclusion is that later Israel, following Ezekiel's lead, better understood the course of history than some modern scholars (such as Stade) think. But this is so, only if König's (improbable) view of the wide spiritual content of Mosaic and patriarchal religion is a true one.

Summing up our final impression of Ezekiel's doctrine, we find in it, after all allowances are made, an idea of God less gracious, less ethical, more archaic and anthropomorphic than that of Deutero-Isaiah. The two are alien in temper, and we are not led to think of Ezekiel as one of the influences which helped in any important measure to mould the mind of Deutero-Isaiah, still less of the writer of the Servant Songs.

## Jeremiah.

We must go further back to find a kindred spirit. Shall we find it in Ezekiel's older contemporary Jeremiah? His activity began a quarter of a century before Ezekiel's, but both were prophesying, one in Jerusalem, and one in Babylon, during the dark reign of Zedekiah.

If *Jeremiah* x. 1–16 might be counted as the genuine work of the prophet, we could claim that he is as explicit in his doctrine of monotheism as Deutero-Isaiah himself. These verses contain the same mockery of the idol-makers,[3] who cut down a tree out of the forest, and deck it with silver and gold, and make of it an image which cannot speak, and must needs be borne, for it cannot go,[4] whereas "Yahwe is the God in truth, the living God, and an everlasting king," and there is none like unto him.[5]

It is admitted, however, on all sides that this passage breaks the context, and that it has in view a different

[1] *Bib. Theol. des A.T.*, i § 125. 4. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 393.
[3] x. 3 f. [4] x. 5. [5] x. 10, x. 6.

situation from that of chaps. vii–ix, which denounce the corruptions of Judah's own worship. Older commentators, e.g. Orelli, have supposed that the passage was addressed by Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylon, but the style as well as the subject-matter differ from that of the undoubtedly genuine portions of the book, and most modern scholars assign the verses to a later hand.[1] We cannot, therefore, rely upon them for proof, and Barton is not justified in drawing from them his dictum: "Jeremiah was the first Hebrew known to us who reached a theoretical monotheism."[2]

On the other side we have the judgement: "Along the line of the personal realization of truth rather than that of its formulation into explicit doctrine lies Jeremiah's particular contribution to religion. . . . Apart from this he is not a pioneer of great ideas."[3] And again: "The importance of Jeremiah in the religion of Israel arises not so much from any definite doctrine promulgated by him as from the example he gave of a man true to his convictions throughout a life-time of trial and opposition."[4]

Yet the embodiment of religious conviction in a living man powerfully affects subsequent thought, and in that sense Jeremiah is a pioneer of some of the greatest ideas of Hebrew prophecy. It is hard to doubt that his sufferings for the truth's sake helped to give form to the ideal of the Suffering Servant of *Isaiah*, chap. liii, and directly or indirectly to Jesus' conception of himself as the Suffering Son of Man. Indeed, as we move about amid the thoughts of Jeremiah, we seem to be nearer to the mind of Jesus than we are in reading any other of the prophets and teachers of Israel—the Servant Songs excepted. We feel that the question of theoretical monotheism is, in his case, of secondary importance. Yahwe is so near to his own soul that the gods many and lords many of the heathen have no practical reality for him: they are "vanity" (*hebhel*, a breath, vapour).[5]

[1] Cf. Peake in *Century Bible*, "Jeremiah," vol. i. p. 170; Schmidt in *E.Bi.*, col. 2385; Cornill in *S.B.O.T.* [2] *Religion of Israel*, p. 123.
[3] H. Wheeler Robinson in Peake's *Commentary*, p. 475.
[4] H. P. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 177. Cf. A. B. Davidson, *H.D.B.*, ii 576 *b*.
[5] הֶבֶל, ii. 5, xvi. 19.

Yahwe fills heaven and earth,[1] he placed "the sand for the bound of the sea," he "giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in its season."[2] Thus he is the God of nature. Still more plainly is he shown as the God of all peoples, who sets his prophet "over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow; to build and to plant."[3] He is, moreover, the God of individuals, knowing their hearts, the Lord of hosts, that trieth the righteous, that seeth the reins and heart.[4]

Some such idea of God is practically indistinguishable from monotheism,[5] and Deutero-Isaiah had in it an answer ready to hand when he confronted with his questioning the gods of Babylon, and declared: "Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought."[6]

Can we also attribute to Jeremiah an anticipation of the doctrine of the Servant Songs: that Yahwe is willing to become the God of the nations as well as of the Jews? One verse at least seems to justify our doing so. The prophet prays: "O Yahwe, . . . unto thee shall the nations come from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Our fathers have inherited nought but lies, even vanity and things wherein there is no profit." And Yahwe answers: "I will cause them to know, this once will I cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is Yahwe."[7]

The genuineness of this passage is not unquestioned: verse 21 reminds us of Ezekiel, and may have assumed its present form under his influence. But Giesebrecht and Cornill accept verse 19, and the latter urges that the expectation contained in it lay right in the direction of Jeremiah's theology, and is a consequence of his conception of religion. We may, therefore, at this point claim that Jeremiah is a pioneer of the great ideal of universalism. It will be seen, as we proceed, that the rest of his teaching points toward it.

Jeremiah is pre-eminently the teacher of *inwardness*,

[1] xxiii. 24. [2] v. 22–24. [3] i. 10. [4] xx. 12.
[5] But see xvi. 13, where there is a tacit recognition of heathen deities.
[6] Isa. xli. 24. [7] xvi. 19, 21.

the religion of the heart. He denounces, indeed, the overt acts of sin which called for Yahwe's inevitable punishment—theft, murder, adultery, perjury, oppression of the helpless.[1] The very temple is defiled and made a "den of robbers" by the open wickedness of the worshippers therein.[2] But Jeremiah is not content with denouncing the outward manifestations of sin: he traces them back to their origin in the heart of man.[3] "The heart is deceitful above all things, and is desperately sick: who can know it? I, Yahwe, search the heart, I try the reins."[4] No outward ordinance can put men in a right relation to God: circumcision must be of the heart and not in the flesh merely.[5] The *locus classicus* for the doctrine of inwardness in religion is the passage on the New Covenant.[6]

> The genuineness of this passage has been denied by several modern scholars, including Movers, Stade, Smend, Schmidt (in article "Covenant" in *Encyclopædia Biblica*), and Cheyne.[7] But it is firmly maintained by Marti[8] and Cornill, and the latter brilliantly refutes the exhaustive adverse criticism of Duhm.[9] Peake accepts it without hesitation.[10] It will, therefore, be used here.

In the days to come Yahwe will make a new covenant with his people, based not on external commandments, like the covenant of Sinai, but on a law written in their hearts. As a result each Israelite will have an intuitive knowledge, and will need no human teacher, and he will know not a code of ordinances, but Yahwe himself. "They shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them."[11]

Such a "law" is law only in name; in effect it is an inner spring of action like the great commandment of Jesus. Indeed, the word which Jeremiah uses (*tora*)[12] means "instruction" or "teaching," and its significance

[1] ix. 1–9.
[2] vii. 1–15.
[3] vii. 24, xi. 8.
[4] xvii. 9 f.
[5] iv. 4.
[6] xxxi. 31–34.
[7] Cf. *Two Religions of Israel*, pp. 60 f.
[8] Marti: *Gesch. der Isr. Rel.* (1907).
[9] Cornill: *Jeremiah*, pp. 349 ff.
[10] Peake: *Century Bible*, "Jeremiah," ii. 120 f.
[11] Cf. xxiv. 7.
[12] See *B.D.B.*, תּוֹרָה.

has not yet become hardened into the sense of a definite and precise precept like those of the Deuteronomic or the Priestly Code. It was still capable, therefore, of being understood as a "law of liberty."

In effect Jeremiah's hope and aspiration is that in the good time to come all the Lord's people should be prophets like himself, to whom Yahwe's words would be a joy and a rejoicing of their heart.[1]

Closely connected with the "inwardness" of religion in Jeremiah's doctrine is its *individualism*. The promise of the new covenant is that *each one* from the least to the greatest should know Yahwe, and *each one* should be in direct personal relations with him. In this case also Jeremiah was in truth the pioneer of a great idea, the importance of which cannot easily be exaggerated.

That individualistic traits existed in the religion of Israel prior to his time[2] need not, of course, be denied, but they are comparatively few, and they are not in the foreground. It is in Jeremiah that the personal claim of the individual to direct communion with God is for the first time emphasized.

> König is surely led away by his anxiety to disagree with Lohr and Marti, when he says that it cannot be positively proved that Jeremiah exercised a direct influence on the development of the consciousness of individual responsibility.[3]

The prophet's repeated appeals to the individual to turn from his evil way[4] reinforce the personal application of the promise of the law written in the inward parts. So again, in his indictment of the nation he does not merely pronounce a general judgement, but singles out the individuals of which society is composed. If there can be found but one righteous man in Jerusalem, God would pardon the city. But though the prophet turns from one to another, from rich to poor, he finds none.[5]

If we could be sure that chap. xxxi. 29 f. were written by Jeremiah, we should have as categorical a statement

[1] xv. 16.
[2] See König, *op. cit.*, pp. 385 ff.
[3] König, *op. cit.*, p. 388.
[4] שׁוּבוּ נָא אִישׁ מִדַּרְכּוֹ הָרָעָה, xviii. 11, xxv. 5, xxxv. 15.
[5] v. 1–5. Cf. viii. 4–7.

of individual responsibility as any in Ezekiel. The proverb: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge," is quoted for refutation, as it is in *Ezekiel* chap. xviii. Many, however, deny the genuineness of the words in *Jeremiah*, and it is perhaps better not to weaken the chain of evidence by the addition of a link which may not bear the strain of criticism. There is enough without it to prove the profound difference between Jeremiah's position and that which was maintained prior to his time.[1]

In one respect Jeremiah's doctrine is less crude than Ezekiel's. Taught, it may be, by a fuller personal experience, the former recognizes the force of ingrained habit. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Not that man's nature is inherently evil, and that repentance is impossible to the sinner, for even in this same context the prophet anticipates the ultimate cleansing of Jerusalem, though the process may be long.[2] Had he been asked: "Who then can be saved?" we may conjecture that he would have replied with Jesus: "With men it is impossible, but not with God."

Since, then, Jeremiah laid such stress upon the inward and personal in religion, we have to ask what was his attitude to the cultus, to the Temple, and to the Deuteronomic Code, which was promulgated during the years of his activity. He, like Ezekiel, was of priestly birth. Was he, like Ezekiel, a "priest in prophet's clothing"? Emphatically no! His attitude to the popular worship, with its sacrifices on the high places, accompanied by all the foul rites of Canaanite Ba'alism, with its even darker rites of human sacrifice in the valley of the Son of Hinnom, its adoration of the Queen of Heaven and all the host on high, was uncompromisingly hostile.[3] In his view, Israel throughout its history in Canaan had been unfaithful, and its apostasy passed all

[1] See Kautzsch, *H.D.B.*, v. 697.

[2] xiii. 27. Rendering: "How long shall it be before thou art made clean?"

[3] See chaps. vii–ix.

precedent and all comparison: "Consider diligently, and see if there hath been such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods?" [1]

No doubt the people would have repudiated the charge, and have denied that they had forsaken Yahwe for the Ba'alim. And Jeremiah would have replied that the name they invoked did not redeem their worship from heathenism, when the rites they used were heathenish.

Yet he does not carry his condemnation back so far as did Ezekiel: there had been a time when Israel was faithful—the time of the wilderness wanderings. "I remember," says Yahwe, "the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals; how thou wentest after me in the wilderness." [2] But these were days before the introduction of the sacrificial cultus. "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." [3] Words could hardly say more clearly that obedience is not only better than sacrifice, but that sacrifice is no part of Yahwe's requirement of his people.

> So long as the Mosaic origin of the whole Pentateuch was maintained, it was necessary to explain by a *tour de force* that Jeremiah meant the opposite of what he said; but the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, and the general recognition of the priority of the prophets to the Priestly Code, has saved us from that disagreeable necessity.

It may be urged that, if this chapter was written after 621 B.C., Jeremiah must have been acquainted with the Deuteronomic Code.[4] But if so, there are independent grounds for doubting whether his attitude towards the code was favourable; and, even supposing that he did regard the code as a divine revelation, he may, as Kautzsch argues,[5] have held that it simply regulates sacrifice as

[1] ii. 10 f. [2] ii. 2. [3] vii. 22 f.
[4] If Kennett's date for D be accepted, this argument *ipso facto* falls to the ground.
[5] *H.D.B.*, v. p. 686.

an established custom without imposing it in virtue of a divine command.[1]

This denial of the existence of divine commands relative to sacrifice determines the force of the saying in chap. vi. 20: "Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable nor your sacrifices pleasing unto me." It is a rejection of sacrifice *in se*, not of sacrifices which, though right and good in themselves, were made unacceptable by the unworthiness of the offerers.[2]

Jeremiah's attitude towards the Temple is equally decided. He does not, indeed, deny its title to be called Yahwe's house, but he asserts vehemently that Yahwe is not irrevocably bound to it. At Shiloh as well as at Jerusalem there had been a house where Yahwe had caused his name to dwell at the first; but because of the wickedness of Israel he forsook it.[3] So will he forsake Jerusalem and its Temple by reason of Judah's flagrant sin.

In this matter Jeremiah was in direct conflict with the mass of the people and with its rulers. The Temple had become a ground of superstitious confidence. Whether they amended their ways or not, Jerusalem and its sacred house would be secure under Yahwe's protection—this was the general belief. They repeated, as though it were a magic incantation, the formula: "The temple of Yahwe, the temple of Yahwe, the temple of Yahwe are these."[4] The prophet replied with reiterated threats of destruction,[5] and it is no wonder that he narrowly escaped the fate of St. Stephen, whom the Jews of another generation, equally fanatical in their veneration for the Temple, slew because he had spoken words against this holy place.[6]

Jeremiah had freed himself from the old conception of Yahwe as a tribal or national God, irrevocably bound to his people and his sanctuary. He protested with an energy and a certainty not heard before that Yahwe was free from all limitations. This is the lesson of the

[1] See *infra.*, pp. 163 f.
[2] Cf. xi. 15 (LXX) as in R.V. marg.
[3] vii. 12, 14.
[4] vii. 4.
[5] xii. 7, xxii. 5, xxvi. 12.
[6] Acts vi. 13.

symbol of the potter, who has absolute liberty to make or mar the vessel in his hand.[1]

Here again Jeremiah is moving as a pioneer on the road that leads to universalism and to the saying at the well of Samaria: "Neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father . . . the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."[2]

Furthermore, Jeremiah's political policy of submission to Babylon is a sign that he conceived religion on a higher plane than that of national pride. The religion of Yahwe could, and would, survive the merging of Israel in a world-empire. The individualism of his religion raises it above the ebb and flow of national fortunes. Yet Jeremiah's individualism is not of the "atomic" kind. He never ceased to feel himself a member of a community which Yahwe loved with an everlasting love,[3] and he never ceased to hope for a national restoration, when chastisement had done its work.[4]

How did Jeremiah regard the Deuteronomic Code? We ask the question, assuming, with the majority of scholars, that it was promulgated after his public work had begun. It is doubtful, however, whether a decided answer can be given. Apart from a judgement based on a general impression of the affinity between *Deuteronomy* and the writings of the prophet, the decision would turn upon the view taken of chap. xi. 1–8 and chap. viii. 8 f. Is the covenant which Jeremiah is bidden to proclaim in the cities of Judah the covenant to which king Josiah and his people pledged themselves "to confirm the words of this covenant that were written in this book,"[5] i.e. the kernel, at least, of *Deuteronomy*? If it is, then, further, is the passage[6] genuine? When, moreover, the people say: "We are wise and the law of Yahwe is with us," and the prophet answers: "The false pen of the scribes hath wrought falsely," is the reference to the Deuteronomic law, and does he describe it as falsehood? Or is it only the scribes' perversions of it that he so condemns?

[1] xix. 10 f. [2] John iv. 21, 23. [3] xxxi. 3.
[4] xxiv. 6, xxix. 10, xxxi. 1–6, xxxi. 15–22, xxxii. 15.
[5] 2 Kings xxiii. 3. [6] xi. 1–14.

Duhm and Cornill deny the genuineness of chap. xi. 1–14, but Giesebrecht, Budde, and Peake incline to accept it. Perhaps for a time the young prophet was swayed by the enthusiasm of the reforming party, and became an advocate of its programme. This would account for the hostility of his kinsmen, the priests of Anathoth, who saw their position threatened by the centralization of the cultus which was aimed at by *Deuteronomy*. But experience proved that a ritual reform was inadequate to stay the "perpetual backsliding" [1] of the people of Jerusalem, and when Jeremiah contrasts the life of Josiah with that of his degenerate son, he speaks of the father's judgement of "the cause of the poor and needy," but says not a word of the reformation to which the narrative of the reign in *Kings* gives so much space.[2]

It is, however, to the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign that chap. viii. 8 f. belongs. Hence it seems not unlikely that this passage *does* refer to *Deuteronomy*. The code, with its exaltation of the one place of sacrifice, may well have been made a buttress for the dogma of Zion's inviolability—a dogma which was in the prophet's eyes the falsehood which stood in the way of any real moral reform.

The conclusion would seem to be that, even if for a while he hoped for a good result from the Deuteronomic covenant, his mature and settled judgement was adverse. There must be a new covenant, he saw, and a new law, and that not written on tables of stone or in the roll of a book, but on "the fleshly tables of the heart."

Jeremiah, therefore, lends no authority to legalism, but is rather a pioneer of that great ideal of religion as the filial response of the heart to the will of God revealed within it. "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth, and knoweth me, that I am Yahwe which exercise loving-kindness, judgement, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith Yahwe." [3] Here in a sentence the moral character of God is proclaimed, and although Jeremiah seldom speaks in set terms of the divine Fatherhood, and then only in

[1] viii. 5. [2] xxii. 15 f. [3] ix. 24.

reference to the nation,[1] we feel that no other word than Father will fitly describe the God of grace with whom he lives in such intimate communion, and before whom he lays bare his inmost soul.[2]

## Deuteronomy.

Although we hold that *Deuteronomy* as a legal and ritual code failed to win Jeremiah's final approval, yet there is much in it with which he must have been in sympathy, for *Deuteronomy* is an outcome of the prophetic movement of the eighth century, as well as a starting-point of the legalism which continues its course through Ezekiel and the Priestly Code, and issues in the Pharisaism familiar to us through the Gospels. It is in its "prophetic" character that the book falls to be considered here.

The *Shema*[3] has been the cherished profession of faith among the pious Jews of every sort for twenty-five centuries. Its opening sentences are re-affirmed by Jesus himself as the first and great commandment, which, combined with its counterpart and corollary of love to one's neighbour, covers the whole of human duty.[4] "Hear, O Israel, Yahwe our God is one Yahwe; and thou shalt love Yahwe thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength. And these words that I command thee shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them to thy children, and shalt speak of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest in the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them as signs upon thy hands and as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thy house and upon thy gates." These words contain the essence of the message of the book. It will not be necessary to distinguish here between its earlier and later strata, for a single spirit is in all, and their teaching is practically uniform. The *Shema* emphasizes three points: the unity of Yahwe, the duty of love towards him, and the expression

[1] iii. 4, 19, xxxi. 9, 20.
[2] Cf. Wellhausen: *Isr. u. Jud. Gesch.*, p. 106.
[3] Deut. vi. 4–9.
[4] Mark xii. 29–31.

of that love by the fulfilment of the commands written in the book of the law.[1] In the first two of these points the teaching of the prophets is condensed; from the third starts "book religion" and the piety which finds its guide and standard in a written law.

The unity of Yahwe which is asserted in the *Shema* is opposed, not to a conscious polytheism, but to the popular conception, which saw in the various sanctuaries the homes of local deities.[2] These might all be invoked as Yahwe, but the practical effect was a division of the Godhead. Against this *Deuteronomy* protests that Yahwe is one, and opposes to the unworthy ideas that were current its own doctrine of God: "Yahwe is God of gods, and Lord of Lords, the great God, the mighty and terrible, which regardeth not persons nor taketh reward. He doth execute the judgement of the fatherless, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment." [3] "To Yahwe belongeth the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that therein is." [4]

Such doctrine in its religious value is not easily distinguishable from absolute monotheism, and in fact in chap. iv. 35 and 39 the solity of Yahwe is explicitly stated: "He is God, and there is none beside him."

The fourth chapter belongs, indeed, to one of the later additions to the kernel of *Deuteronomy*, and elsewhere in the book the absolute denial of the existence of other gods is not maintained. The frequent use of the phrase "other gods" is in itself an indication that the author admitted their reality in some sense. In the Song of Moses [5] it is said: "When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the children of men, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the sons of God. But Yahwe's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." [6] The sons of God are here the inferior deities over whom Yahwe reigns supreme.[7] They are allotted as gods to the

[1] Cf. H. P. Smith: *Religion of Israel*, p. 183.
[2] *Vide supra.* [3] x. 17–19. [4] x. 14.
[5] Deut. xxxii. [6] xxxii. 8 f.
[7] Reading with the LXX and Lat. versions בְּנֵי אֵל for בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. Cf. the same conception in the Psalter and *vide supra*, Chap. II.

heathen, while Yahwe himself is Israel's God.[1] Such a conception cannot be reconciled with a theoretical monotheism, though it is consistent with a belief in the universal supremacy of Yahwe.

Yahwe's personal presence is, however, still localized at Jerusalem, the place which he has chosen "to put his name there,"[2] and the sacrifices at the altar are said to be brought "before Yahwe."[3] At the same time he dwells in heaven, and the Israelite is taught to pray: "Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven."[4] There is an inconsistency here, which may, however, be partly reconciled, if we regard the "name," like the "glory" of Yahwe, as his manifestation form, and not his full and essential being.[5]

Of universalism in the sense of hope or expectation that Yahwe will one day be recognized by all nations as their God, there is no trace in *Deuteronomy*: extermination not conversion is the destiny of the Canaanites.[6] No Ammonite nor Moabite is ever to enter into the assembly of Yahwe.[7] An Edomite may enter in the third generation,[8] but even so Yahwe becomes his God only because he himself is now included in Israel. In *Deuteronomy* we are still in the sphere of nationalism in religion, and are very far from the ideal of the Servant Songs.

Emphatic stress is laid upon the spirituality of Yahwe, who may not be represented by an image,[9] nor even by the familiar *maṣṣeba* or *'ashera*.[10] For at Horeb, though a voice was heard, the people saw no form.[11] Such is the declaration of the Deuteronomist, but his repeated polemic shows how common images must have been in the popular worship of his time.

The moral character of Yahwe is displayed both in the requirements he makes of his people and in his own personal action. "What doth Yahwe thy God require of thee but to fear Yahwe thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve Yahwe thy God with all

[1] Cf. iv. 19.
[2] xii. 5.
[3] xii. 7, xxvi. 13.
[4] xxvi. 15.
[5] *Vide supra*, p. 118.
[6] vii. 2.
[7] xxiii. 3.
[8] xxiii. 7 f.
[9] iv. 16.
[10] xvi. 21.
[11] iv. 12, 15.

thy heart and with all thy soul."[1] "He doth execute the judgement of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger."[2] This divine love is set forth for Israel's imitation.[3]

The emphatic declaration of Yahwe's love and of Israel's duty to love him in return is, indeed, a striking characteristic of *Deuteronomy*, and goes far to explain the influence which the book appears to have had upon the mind of Jesus.

It is important also to observe how thoroughly the Decalogue has become ethical in *Deuteronomy*. Even in the fourth commandment the motive is humanitarian, not ritual, and the observance of the Sabbath is enjoined that labouring man and beast may have rest.[4] The contrast in this respect between *Deuteronomy* on the one hand, and the earlier code of E[5] and the later code of P[6] on the other, is a marked one.

The humane tone of the Deuteronomic Code is in fact remarkable. Kindness is claimed for the slave,[7] for the captive in war,[8] for the poor and needy,[9] for the debtor,[10] the stranger,[11] the fatherless and the widow,[12] even for the ox that treadeth out the corn,[13] and for the bird with her young.[14]

It must, however, be remembered that this humanitarian spirit is manifested towards Israel alone, and that a different standard is set up for dealings with the foreigner.[15] "The stranger within the gates"[16] who is so often commended to mercy is not any foreigner who happens to be in the country, but a client from another nation who has attached himself as a dependent to some citizen, and is on the way to rights of citizenship. The Deuteronomist would have found a "hard saying" in the answer of Jesus to the question: Who is my neighbour?

The doctrine of retribution is stated in *Deuteronomy*

[1] x. 12. [2] x. 18. [3] x. 19.
[4] v. 14. [5] Exod. xx. 11. [6] Gen. ii. 3.
[7] xv. 12–18. [8] xxi. 10–15. [9] xv. 7–11.
[10] xv. 2, xxiv. 10. [11] x. 19. [12] xxiv. 19.
[13] xxv. 4. [14] xxii. 6. [15] xxiii. 20 f.
[16] xxiv. 14, 17, etc.

with elaborate fullness and eloquent emphasis as the primary principle of God's moral government.[1] The relation between Yahwe and his people is conceived as resting on a covenant, a charter published, as it were, by the divine King, to which Israel has bound itself by a solemn engagement.[2] The principle that righteousness exalteth a nation, and the tendency of good to prevail over evil in this present world,[3] are asserted by the Deuteronomist in such unqualified terms that they appear as the manifestation of a universal law, working with mechanical regularity.

This principle of retribution is applied by the historians of the Deuteronomic school, when they recount the story of Israel's national life, and the books of *Judges* and of *Kings* become in their hands didactic narratives in which this principle is consistently applied. In the sphere of a people's history it was possible to work out the theory without much violence to facts, and the impressive moral power of the historical books of the Old Testament is due in no small measure to the successful application of it; but the theory breaks down when it is rigidly applied within the narrower sphere of individual life, and creates the problem which is debated with such poignant intensity in the book of *Job*.[4]

It must have been observed that even in the national life the theory did not hold without exceptions, and the religious reaction under Manasseh may have been due in a measure to the apparent disproof of it in the defeat and death of the pious covenant-keeping king Josiah. Yet the Deuteronomic historians did not modify the theory, and the Chronicler after them, adhering to it with equal tenacity, adjusted his facts to the theory by making Josiah meet his tragic end after disregarding a divine warning conveyed by the mouth of Neco, king of Egypt.[5]

However, this theory of retribution, mechanically conceived as it was, and applied sometimes in defiance of

[1] Cf. chap. xxviii *et passim*.
[2] Cf. Loisy: *Religion of Israel*, pp. 173 ff.
[3] Cf. Butler: *Analogy*, part i, chap. iii.
[4] *Vide supra*.
[5] 2 Chron. xxxv. 20 ff.

experience, is an invaluable testimony to the irrefragable conviction of the prophets and teachers of Israel that Yahwe is a God of justice, a Power working always for righteous ends. The theory, after all, was not rejected by Jesus, but he lifted its promise of reward from the material to the spiritual plane, and enlarged its scope by the vision of a future life in which this world's unsolved problems will find their explanation.

Here for a time we may leave the book of *Deuteronomy*, while we look back over the prophetic movement of the eighth century out of which emerges that lofty idea of God as a unique, spiritual, righteous, and loving Person, which comes before us both in the Deuteronomic Code and in the exhortations that are its setting.

### Summary.

Deutero-Isaiah was preceded by Ezekiel, who emphasizes the holiness of God. Deutero-Isaiah had used the term in a moral sense, but in Ezekiel the moral and physical are blended. Ezekiel's doctrine is not explicitly monotheistic, but he insists on the transcendent majesty of Yahwe. Ezekiel is more anthropomorphic than 2 Isaiah. His insistence on Yahwe's regard for his own honour mars the conception of the ethical character of the Godhead. So also does the union of ethical and ritual requirements. The assertion of the moral responsibility of the individual is an important contribution to doctrine. Ezekiel regards Israel's history as one long apostasy, and all its worship as idolatry. His idea of God is more archaic and less ethical than that of 2 Isaiah.

Jeremiah's doctrine is practically indistinguishable from monotheism, though explicit statements are lacking in his genuine work. If chap. xvi. 19 and 21 be genuine, he is a pioneer of universalism. He is pre-eminently the teacher of inwardness in religion, and looks forward to the new covenant which will be written in the heart of the individual. He is radically opposed to the sacrificial cultus, which he regards as no better than Ba'al-worship. God commanded no sacrifices in the wilderness days, the time of Israel's first love. He was not in full sympathy with the Deuteronomic reform, and later denounced the people's fanatical trust in the inviolability of Jerusalem. Though he seldom speaks of God's fatherhood, his conception of religion as a personal communion between God and man points the way to this idea. *Deuteronomy* is the starting-point of legalism, but also the outcome of the prophetic movement of the eighth century. It insists on the unity of God in opposition to popular misconceptions due to the worship of

Yahwe at a multiplicity of sanctuaries. The doctrine of the book is practically indistinguishable from monotheism, but the recognition of other gods and the localizing of Yahwe's presence at Jerusalem are inconsistent with theoretical monotheism. Stress is laid on the spirituality and the moral character of Yahwe. His love for Israel and his requirement of love are frequently spoken of. The spirit of *Deuteronomy* is humanitarian, but it is still limited by nationalism. Retribution as the principle of God's moral government is impressively taught

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meaning is partly ethical, but more prominently ceremonial. Jeremiah does not apply the epithet "holy" to God at all. But Isaiah uses it frequently, and in a sense that is predominantly ethical. The older, quasi-physical meaning is traceable, indeed, in the suggestion that it is dangerous for the "unclean" to approach Yahwe,[1] but what "uncleanness" is, the context and other passages clearly reveal. It is iniquity or sin,[2] which is defined in chap. xxx. 12 as trust in oppression and perverseness, and again in chap. i. 16 f., by contrast with its opposite: "Cease to do evil: learn to do well; seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." The oppressors and the drunkards will be punished, because "the holy God hath shown himself holy in righteousness." [3]

For Isaiah, therefore, Yahwe is a "transcendent moral Person." [4] That he is *moral* we have just seen; that he is *transcendent* is made evident throughout the prophet's utterances. For "the whole earth is full of his glory," [5] and the mighty ruler of the Assyrian empire is as a "staff in his indignant hand." [6] Before him the lofty looks of man shall be brought low, and the idols shall utterly pass away.[7] Before such a God the gods of the heathen vanish into nothingness: [8] they are *'ĕlîlîm*, a term which would recall both *'ĕlîl*, meaning "weak and worthless," and *'ĕlîm*, or *'ĕlōhîm*, meaning "gods"; [9] and so it is here applied in bitter and contemptuous irony. Here then is the same "practical" or "virtual" monotheism that we found in *Ezekiel*, *Jeremiah*, and *Deuteronomy*.

Explicit statements of the solity of Yahwe Isaiah does not give us; nor yet does he refer to the work of Yahwe in creation. The questions which primarily interested the Hebrews were not the same as those to which we turn first. Even when Deutero-Isaiah insists on the creative might of Yahwe, it is rather to contrast his greatness with the insignificance of the nations of mankind than to offer

[1] vi. 5. [2] vi. 7. [3] v. 16.
[4] H. W. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 70. [5] vi. 3.
[6] x. 5. Reading מַטֵּה בְיָד זַעְמִי. [7] ii. 11, 18.
[8] ii. 8, 18, 20. [9] אֱלֹהִים, אֵלִים, אֵלִיל, אֱלִילִים.

any solution of the philosophical problem of the origin of the material universe.

So Isaiah looks for the signs of God's omnipotence and purposive activity in human history rather than in nature. This direction of the prophet's interest ensures his firm hold upon the personality of Yahwe. The search for God in nature may lead, and often has led, to the identification of God with nature or to his abstraction as a Law or First Cause; but the Providence which guides the course of human history by active intervention in the affairs of men must be personal.

Hence Isaiah uses that anthropomorphic and anthropopathic language which arises, no doubt, in beliefs far less spiritual than his own, but which is difficult to avoid at any stage of thought, if we are to speak of God as a real, a living Person. Thus he refers to the outstretched arm of Yahwe,[1] to his mouth,[2] his eyes, to his rising to shake mightily the earth, to his indignation, his zeal, and his wrath.[3] In chap. xxx. 27–33 the anthropomorphic metaphors are accumulated with a boldness hardly found elsewhere in the scriptures of the Old Testament.

Yet Isaiah knows how to use a wise restraint, when there might be danger of producing a wrong impression. In the narrative of his call he tells us that he saw the Lord, the skirts of whose robe filled the Temple; then he stops short, and does not even say, as Ezekiel does, that there was "a likeness as the appearance of a man."[4] It is just in a vision like this, seen in the familiar surroundings of the Temple, that the prophet shrinks from any definition of the glorious form of the Lord.

It is the same jealous reverence for the spirituality of the idea of God which moves him to indignation against the image-makers, who "worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made."[5] Yahwe is spirit, not flesh,[6] an ever-active, almighty energy, that cannot be embodied in the idols of silver and gold which Israel had made to itself "for a sin."[7]

[1] ix. 12, 17, 21.
[2] xxx. 2.
[3] ii. 19, 21, ix. 7, x. 5.
[4] Ezek. i. 26.
[5] ii. 8. Cf. xxx. 22, etc.
[6] xxxi. 3.
[7] xxxi. 7.

But, transcendent though he is, Yahwe is still the God, the Holy One of Israel, a *national* God to whom his people were united by special and peculiar ties. They alone are his people, his children whom he has nourished and brought up,[1] his carefully tended possession.[2] Other nations are his subjects, the instruments of his purposes ; [3] but Israel only is his concern in and for itself. The universalism of the beautiful poem in chap. ii. 2–4 cannot, in face of the verdict of recent criticism, be attributed to Isaiah himself.[4] " The spirit of the whole, and some of the particular ideas, leave the impression of a passage that was written nearer to the time of chaps. xl–lv and Ezekiel than of Isaiah."[5]

Much of recent criticism denies also the Isaianic authorship of all or most of the so-called Messianic passages in chaps. i–xxxix.[6] We feel reluctance, perhaps, to admit that the beautiful and familiar words may come from other authors, as though a later origin would impair their value ; but this is, after all, a prejudice, though a natural one.[7] The high ideals are what they are, from whomsoever they come. But their omission from his words does impoverish the theology of Isaiah. On the other hand, the movement of thought becomes more intelligible, if they are assigned to a period towards the end of the Exile, and to the time of the second Isaiah rather than the first. If, then, we may not reckon these passages to him, Isaiah is left to us as primarily and predominantly a prophet of judgement, calling on his people to repent, but seeing little hope that they will do so. Indeed, the effect of his preaching will be rather to harden them in their sin. Such is the purport of the words of Yahwe at Isaiah's call : " Go, and tell this people, Hearken on, but understand not ! See, yea, see, but perceive not ! Make dull the heart of this people, and make its ears heavy, and plaster over its eyes ; lest it see with its eyes, and hear with its ears, and its heart understand, and it be healed once more." [8]

[1] i. 3, i. 2. [2] v. 1–7. [3] x. 5 ff.
[4] See Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 44. [5] Gray, *loc. cit.*
[6] See Gray, *op. cit.*, on ix. 1–6, xi. 1–8, xxx. 19–26, xxxii. 1–8, xxxiii.
[7] See discussion of this point in Nairne : *Faith of the O.T.*, pp. 58 ff.
[8] vi. 9 f. (Gray's translation).

The passage is, however, plainly ironical, and is an instance, moreover, of the familiar identification of purpose and result in Hebrew thought and language. We cannot believe that Yahwe called his prophet *in order to* harden the people in their sin, and in fact there are passages, whose genuineness is unquestionable, in which Isaiah looks beyond the inevitable judgement. When he named one of his sons Shear-jashub—"a remnant will turn"[1]—he looked forward to the repentance of some few at least. Nay, more, in chap. i. 26 f. the restoration of Zion herself is predicted: "I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning. Afterwards thou shalt be called City of Justice, Faithful City." Yahwe, therefore, is not only a God of righteousness and of just judgement, but a God of Grace also, who will pardon the remnant of the people that repents, as he pardoned Isaiah himself, when in the vision he confessed his uncleanness.[2]

Still the love of God remains in the background of the thought. Twice only, and then by implication, not directly, is Yahwe called the Father of his people,[3] and his fatherly love for the individual is never mentioned. Isaiah's message is for the nation, and he does not regard himself as charged, like Ezekiel, with the burden of responsibility for individual souls. His sense of his own mission corresponds with his idea of God: Yahwe is Lord of Hosts, the Holy One of Israel, but not yet the loving Father of the Israelite.

It is Yahwe's purpose for Israel as a people that stands always in the foreground. In this purpose king and people are bidden to believe and trust, not in diplomacy.[4] Political alliances are, in the prophet's view, futile in themselves and a proof of disloyalty to Yahwe, who may be counted on to save his people by his own power in any time of need. Furthermore, alliances with foreign nations, which were ratified with religious rites, involved some sort of recognition of foreign gods, and when the alliance was with a far stronger power, like Assyria, it might be

[1] vii. 3.
[2] vi. 5 f.
[3] i. 2, xxx. 1.
[4] vii. 9.

imagined that the God of Israel was made subordinate to the Assyrian deities. Against such a supposition Isaiah protests with all his energy. Nineveh's king might rule a world-empire, yet he was but an instrument of Yahwe's will.

Politically, the prudent policy of Ahaz was justified by its success, and a less favourable view ought to be taken of the prophet's sagacity as a statesman than the view of most commentators,[1] who have regard only to the *ex parte* statements of *Isaiah* and *2 Kings*. But the religious importance of Isaiah's implicit faith in the providence of Yahwe is incalculable. It established in the mind of Israel the firm conviction that God, and not man, determines history, a conviction which, humanly speaking, made possible the survival of the Jewish people through all the vicissitudes of its experience.

A century later the doctrine of Zion's inviolability was, indeed, misused by blind patriots, who imagined that Yahwe's protection was assured to them, even in default of moral reformation.[2] On the other hand, we from our changed standpoint may criticize Isaiah's theory of providence, for we see that God works, in history as in nature, in accordance with laws, partly at least ascertainable by us, and not by catastrophic intervention. But he recognized one law, at any rate, in that he discerned in Yahwe a "power not ourselves that works for righteousness." Righteousness (he saw clearly) was the only ultimate ground of national security, the only ground of reasonable hope for Yahwe's favour.

In this view he stood opposed to the mass of his fellow-countrymen, who still believed that in multiplying sacrifices they knit ever more firmly the tie which bound them to Yahwe, and him to them. It is not necessary to conclude that Isaiah regarded all sacrifices as entirely repugnant to Yahwe; but at least it is his view that they were things not required nor commanded. "Temple-trampling" is no substitute for social justice, and Yahwe would not tolerate the union of wickedness and worship.[3]

[1] E.g. G. A. Smith: *Isaiah*, vol. i, pp. 102–118. *Contra* Loisy: *Religion of Israel*, p. 160. [2] Cf. Jer. vii. 4. [3] i. 12.

The attitude of Isaiah towards the cultus of his own day was certainly hostile, and we have no means of judging whether his attitude would have been different towards a reformed worship such as that sketched by Ezekiel and elaborated in the Priestly Code. But at least we may say that no one of his utterances points to any kind of sacrificial cultus as a way of finding acceptance with God. The teaching of Isaiah points forward to Jeremiah and to Jesus rather than to the priestly element in Ezekiel and the legalism of later times.

In concluding this sketch of Isaiah's teaching, we must admit that he is not a man of great creative originality. Most of his ideas had been anticipated by his predecessors among the eighth-century prophets, and we miss in him some of the great thoughts which emerge in his successors. His true importance lies in the power with which he gave expression to the ideas which came within his comparatively limited range.

## Micah.

The genuine utterances of Micah, the contemporary of Isaiah in Judah, deal with the same theme of judgement upon a people guilty of robbery and oppression,[1] whose corrupt and hypocritical religion calls down upon it the very doom it was intended to avert.[2] Micah, however, from his peasant home in the Shaphelah, regards Jerusalem as the centre of the kingdom's guilt, and anticipates Jeremiah in predicting its total ruin. The venal priests and prophets there were saying: "Is not Yahwe in the midst of us? No evil shall come upon us." Micah replies: "Therefore for your sake shall Zion be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps." [3]

The beautiful words of chap. vi. 6–8 are probably not his, but they may well come from a near contemporary, for they are a summary of all that is most characteristic of the teaching of the eighth-century writing-prophets, voicing their repudiation of the sacrificial cultus and their demand in Yahwe's name for justice and mercy between man and man, and for humility in man's walk before his

[1] Mic. ii. 1–3. [2] iii. 4. [3] iii. 11 f.

God. "Wherewith shall I come before Yahwe, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will Yahwe be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Yahwe require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

## Amos and Hosea.

Amos[1] and Hosea[2] must be considered together in this study, for at the most only a few years separated their ministries. There is no sign that the one influenced the other in such a way that they ought to be taken as representatives of successive stages of thought. Their activities must be regarded as complementary: both face the same general conditions, and each deals with them in his own way.

What these conditions were we can infer from the declarations of the prophets themselves, supplemented by the fragmentary historical records of Israel and its neighbours. When Amos and Hosea were preaching, Northern Israel had enjoyed for a generation a security and prosperity unknown before. If peace was no part of the policy of the warrior-king Jeroboam II, yet at least the soil of Canaan was no longer trodden by invading armies, and the boundaries of the realm were pushed outwards towards the North and East. We know that this extension of territory was made possible mainly because of the temporary inactivity of the Assyrian kings upon their Western front—apart from certain expeditions which weakened Israel's old rivals, the Syrians. But the Israelites were ready, doubtless, to attribute their immunity to the inherent power and prowess of their own nation. Political security during Jeroboam's long reign (785–745), and victories in war, not only inspired self-confidence, but also strengthened their conviction of

[1] 765–750 B.C.
[2] *Circa* 743 B.C. See Harper: *I.C.C.*, "Amos and Hosea," pp. cii, cxli.

Yahwe's might. He, as leader of Israel's hosts, had shown himself superior to the gods of Syria. Hence his people were ready to turn to him with increased devotion, nor need we deny in it an element of genuine gratitude. At the same time, earthquakes and pestilences [1] served to remind them of the uncertainty of life, and of the need to secure the continued favour of Yahwe, lest the troubles of the still-remembered Syrian wars should be renewed.[2] Therefore the sanctuaries, especially the royal house at Beth-el, were crowded with ardent worshippers, who multiplied their sacrifices, and rioted at the lavish sacrificial feasts.[3]

But all this zeal in the performance of religious rites co-existed with widespread and deeply rooted social wickedness. To all outward appearance the religion of the time was entirely unethical. Wealth had increased, and with it luxury and debauchery.[4] The well-to-do were cruel and oppressive, even the women taking their full share in wrongdoing.[5] While feasting went on in the houses of ivory, robbery and violence were abroad, and brotherliness and justice were well-nigh banished from the land.[6] The very priests "murder in the way towards Shechem," and as troops of robbers wait for a man.[7]

The picture painted for us by both prophets is of a society rotten in all its members, wherein the plainest moral laws are openly violated. And yet religion is fashionable, and worship maintained on a large and lavish scale.

These conditions, social and religious, determine the form of the prophets' message. They both maintain, first and last, that true religion is ethical, that Yahwe is a moral Person,[8] and that where there is "nought but swearing and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery," there can be no knowledge of God; [9] for truth and mercy are its accompaniments. It is their insistence upon the moral character of God

[1] Cf. Amos i. 1, iv. 9 f., viii. 9.
[2] Amos iv. 4, vii. 13; Hos. iv. 13, viii. 11.
[3] Amos v. 21–23, vi. 4–6.
[4] Amos ii. 6 f., iii. 12, v. 11; Hos. iv. 11.
[5] Amos iii. 15, iv. 1.
[6] Amos iii. 15; Hos. vii. 1.
[7] Hos. vi. 9.
[8] Amos, chaps. i, ii
[9] Hos. iv. 1 f.

which gives to these two prophets their supreme importance in the history of Israel's religion and the religion of the world. Among other Semitic peoples religion and right living too often were parted asunder, and where mythology prevailed, the morality attributed to the gods was apt to be not better but worse than that of ordinary men. But by Amos and Hosea religion and ethics were so securely locked together as never to be separated thenceforward in Hebrew thought. Through all subsequent changes in the idea of God this at least remained constant: "Yahwe is righteous; he loveth righteousness." [1] More might be added, and that more might be of varying value, but this was not subtracted. Our survey of the later development will have sufficed to show this.

Of course, religion in Israel did not begin to contain a moral element for the first time in the teaching of Amos and Hosea; but it is true to say that in the days of these prophets the fact that it did had been practically forgotten by the majority of the people, the court, the priesthood, and, apparently, the professional prophets, from whom Amos is so careful to distinguish himself.[2] They all thought of God as like in character to the usual Oriental king or lord, who required gifts and offerings, and allowed his favour to be bought by them.

Against such a conception of the divine character both Amos and Hosea protest with all their power of oratory. Yahwe does not require, nay he abhors, their sacrifices and their festivals: "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies." [3] Amos in bitter irony cries: "Come to Beth-el, and transgress; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes every three days, and offer a sacrifice of that which is leavened, and proclaim freewill offerings and publish them: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord Yahwe." [4]

According to Amos, in the golden age of Israel's youth, when the people wandered in the wilderness, no sacrifices were offered.

[1] Ps. xi. 7.
[2] Amos vii. 14.
[3] Amos v. 21.
[4] Amos iv. 4 f.

This, in spite of many other conflicting views, seems to be the plain meaning of the rhetorical question: "Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?" [1] No other meaning seems possible after Yahwe's indignant repudiation of Israel's present sacrifices in the immediately preceding verses.

Amos is thus in full agreement with Jeremiah in his denial that Yahwe commanded sacrifice in the wilderness days.[2] Hosea is equally trenchant in his rejection of the sacrificial cultus. By him Yahwe declares: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God and not burnt-offerings." [3]

The parallel וְלֹא proves that the מִן of the Hebrew in the second clause is not comparative but negative.[4]

Hosea, however, introduces a fresh ground for his condemnation of the contemporary cultus. It is not only the substitution of something else for obedience (the view of Amos), but also the choice of another object of obedience: Ba'al has been put in the place of Yahwe. Hence the wrath of Yahwe is represented as jealousy, and Israel's defection as the breach of a marriage vow.[5] The popular cultus was directed to the *Ba'alim*; this is the charge repeated again and again.[6]

Hosea is, in fact, right in his contention, though the people could have made a formal denial. The prophet is dealing with things, not words, and though it was the name of Yahwe that was invoked at the altars, the rites were of Canaanite origin, and exhibited all the sensuous and immoral features of nature-worship among a Semitic agricultural people. Since the character and nature of a god are largely determined in the minds of his devotees by the kind of worship offered to him, Hosea was justified in maintaining that in effect the object of Israel's worship was not Yahwe but Ba'al.

It is as part of the Canaanite apparatus of worship that he denounces the golden bulls of Beth-el and Dan, which,

[1] Amos v. 25.
[2] Jer. vii. 22. Cf. *supra*, Part B, Chap. III.
[3] Hos. vi. 6.
[4] See Harper: *I.C.C.*, "Hosea," p. 287, and Gesenius-Kautzsch, 119 *w*
[5] Hos. ii. 5–8. [6] ii. 13, etc.

ostensibly as symbols of Yahwe, had for two hundred years been objects of Israel's reverence. Yahwe hath cast off the *calf* of Samaria, says Hosea in contempt,[1] and in another passage he threatens that the people shall be in terror for the calves of Beth-el, which shall be carried away as a present for the king of Assyria.[2]

It is in Hosea that we first meet with effective opposition to the use of images of Yahwe.[3] They may have been forbidden before, but it is clear that the prohibition had been disregarded. Even Amos makes no express objection to images of Yahwe, though doubtless they were tacitly included in his general condemnation of the cultus. His silence may be due to the fact that he regarded the popular practices strictly from an ethical point of view, while Hosea thought of them chiefly as affecting the personal relation between Yahwe and his people. To make images of him was to degrade the idea of God.[4]

But while it is idolatry that arouses the keenest sense of horror in Hosea, he is at one with Amos in regarding Israel's defection from a moral standpoint. Yahwe's controversy with his idolatrous people is "because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land."[5] Again and again he complains that they have no knowledge of God:[6] how could they have it while they worshipped Ba'al? And from that ignorance, which is not mere stupidity but moral blindness, comes all their sin.

Is the repudiation of sacrifice by Amos and Hosea absolute? Harper maintains that it is not.[7] Thus: "It was not sacrifice in general that Amos opposed; nor was it the belief that sacrifice when duly performed can change the mind of Yahwe. It was, rather, the belief that the ritual *of itself* does or can satisfy an ethical duty. Shall we observe the ritual? Yes; but one may not stop there."

Kautzsch argues[8] against such a view with unwonted

[1] viii. 5. [2] x. 5 f. [3] xiii. 1, 2.
[4] See Robertson Smith: *Prophets*, pp. 176 f.; and G. A. Smith: *Book of the Twelve*, vol. i, p. 341 Cf. pp. 54, 199.
[5] Hos. iv. 1. [6] ii. 8, iv. 1, 6, vi. 6, viii. 2.
[7] *Op. cit.*, p. cxix. [8] In *H.D.B.*, v. 685 f

vehemence. To the question: Shall one observe the ritual? he opposes a "flat negative" as the prophets' answer. He describes as a "subterfuge" the argument that the prophets never polemize against sacrifice *per se*, but only against sacrifices hypocritically offered, and he adds that it is "perfectly futile to read out of *Hosea* vi. 6 anything else than a categorical rejection of sacrifice."

Marti writes:[1] "The prophets never oppose to the cultus of their contemporaries another rule of sacrifice or a better conception of sacrifice, but the exercise of love and the knowledge of God. Therefore, their opposition must be understood as fundamental, and their words signify in effect: No sacrifices, but love and the knowledge of God."

Marti is surely right in saying that there is no word in the prophets about a distinction between the popular ritual and a better conception of sacrifice, and Harper seems as surely wrong when he says:[2] "To have opposed sacrifice in itself would have meant opposition to the only method yet known to humanity of entering into communion with deity, in a word the abolition of all tangible worship." We can hardly imagine Amos or Hosea participating in the sacrifices; but assuredly they entered into communion with God. If by "tangible worship" Harper means "corporate worship," it may be replied that the spirit of devotion never fails to invent forms in which to express itself, and that when, in the Exile, sacrifice did cease, such forms were actually found. To say[3] that "neither Amos nor any other Israelite, preceding the Exile, could have dreamed of a period in Israel's history when no sacrifices were to be offered, because this would actually have involved a purely vegetarian diet," is not a strong argument. After all, animal sacrifice

[1] "Die Propheten stellen der Cultusübung ihrer Zeitgenossen nie eine andere Opferordnung oder eine bessere Opferauffassung gegenüber, sondern die Liebesübung und die Gotteserkenntnis. Darum ist ihre Opposition als eine prinzipielle zu verstehen und ihre Worte bedeuten in der That: Keine Opfer, sondern Liebe und rechte Gotteserkenntnis." *Gesch. der Isr. Rel., dritte aufl.*, p. 163.

[2] *Loc. cit.* [3] *Loc. cit.*

and the eating of flesh are infrequent among nomads,[1] and when, in fact, the local sacrifices were abolished, the Deuteronomist found no difficulty in safeguarding his people from the risks of vegetarianism.[2]

The plain fact is that Amos and Hosea, so far as corporate worship is concerned, do not pretend to be constructive—the state was perishing. The cultus, as they saw it, was an abomination, and they repudiated it root and branch.

It is a matter for thankfulness that they did not entangle themselves in any positive programme of reconstruction, and thus were able to present in clear-cut outlines the ideal of a service of God, apart from material gift and offering, consisting in the loyal surrender of the heart to God and in just and kindly dealings with men. Therefore it is to Hosea that Jesus sends the Pharisees, when he bids them "go and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice."[3] Hosea and Amos thus contributed elements of primary importance to the idea of God presented by Jesus to his contemporaries.

The religion of these prophets has been described as an "ethical monotheism." That it was ethical is abundantly evidenced. But was it also monotheism?[4]

Hitherto, in tracing back the idea of God, we have found no explicit statement of monotheism before *Deutero-Isaiah.* The passages in *Amos*, e.g. iv. 13, v. 8 f.; ix. 5 f., which speak clearly of Yahwe as the Creator of heaven and earth, are now regarded almost universally as later additions to the prophet's genuine words.[5] But without doubt he speaks of Yahwe's all-sovereign power: He is Yahwe, the God of Hosts.[6] Originally the "hosts" in this title were the armies of Israel, whose leader was Yahwe; but this meaning is inappropriate in most of the many instances of its use by the writing prophets.[7] It is so in *Amos* ii. 4, where the God of Hosts threatens to

[1] Robertson Smith: *Religion of the Semites*, ed. 2, p. 222.
[2] Deut. xii. 20–23.
[3] Matt. ix. 13.
[4] Cf. G. A. Smith: *Book of the Twelve*, vol. i. pp. 199 ff.
[5] Cf. Harper, *ad. loc.* and references there.
[6] Amos iii. 13, v. 14 f., vi. 8, 14.
[7] See the careful discussion by Kautzsch in *H.D.B.*, v. 636 f., and by Driver in *H.D.B.*, iii. 137.

destroy Israel by means of a foreign nation, as well as in other passages in this book where there is no reference to war at all. The title has now attached to it, as Kautzsch says, "the notion of *supramundane* power and glory." The hosts are, in fact, the hosts of heaven and earth, of nature and man. Yahwe's power over nature, at any rate in his own land, is made evident by his control of the rain, the mildew, the locusts, and the pestilence.[1] In human history he assumes dominion not only over Israel, but also over the neighbouring Syria, Philistia, Ammon and Moab,[2] and declares that he will raise up distant Assyria to afflict the house of Israel.[3]

That Yahwe should make use of a foreign nation to punish his own people was "the first step in the promotion of the God of Israel to his transcendent position as the ruler of the whole world."[4] Amos has, indeed, broken away from the idea of a purely national God. That he never calls Yahwe "the God of Israel" is perhaps accidental, for Yahwe speaks of Israel as "my people";[5] but when as Yahwe's spokesman he says: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities,"[6] it is clear that the prophet has discarded the popular notion that Yahwe's interests were inseparable from those of his people. Further, his moral government of foreign nations is exercised even in cases where Israel is not concerned, for he threatens the Moabites with punishment for their outrage upon the bones of the king of Edom,[7] and the Philistines for their slave raids, which do not appear to have affected Israel.[8] Yahwe is within limits the living and active guardian of the moral order of the world. Moreover, his power extends to heaven and to *She'ol*, to the top of Carmel and to the bottom of the sea.[9] The prophet has here corrected the popular belief, which held that the under-world of the dead lay beyond the realm of Yahwe.

We find, therefore, in Amos a virtual or practical mono-

[1] Amos iv. 6–10. [2] i. 3–5, 6–8, 13–15, ii. 1–3.
[3] vi. 14. [4] H. P. Smith: *Religion of Israel*, p. 138.
[5] vii. 15. [6] iii. 2. [7] ii. 1. [8] i. 6.
[9] ix. 2 f. Cf. H. P. Smith: *Religion of Israel*, p. 140.

theism, though we cannot claim that the doctrine is expressly formulated.

Hosea has much less to say concerning Yahwe's power in nature, though he represents him as the giver of the good gifts of the soil,[1] and as extending his power to *She'ol*.[2] But in history he has delivered his people from Egypt, guided it in its early days, and spoken unto it by his prophets.[3] Hosea is, however, silent as to any activity of Yahwe among the nations. There are no statements about the sole existence of Yahwe, and, on the other hand, the prophet's extreme bitterness against the *Ba'alim*, and his reference to the "uncleanness" of foreign lands, suggest that he acknowledged the existence of other gods.[4] The analogy of the unfaithful wife under which Hosea describes the sin of Israel in its idolatry depends for its meaning on the assumption that the nation has forsaken Yahwe, its lawful husband, for another god. The figure of the marriage relation points the way to monotheism (but does not do more) by insisting on the thought that Yahwe tolerates no rivals. A religion so completely ethical as Hosea's no doubt demands monotheism for its logical basis, but the prophet has not worked out the implications of his own ideas.

Both prophets use anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms. Amos pictures Yahwe as an armed warrior, and uses the phrases "turn my hand," "will not smell," "eyes of the Lord Yahwe."[5] He sees Yahwe in visions, though no detail of his appearance is given.[6] Yahwe "repents," i.e. changes his purpose,[7] and takes an oath.[8] Similarly Hosea speaks of the "face" of Yahwe, his "arms,"[9] and in chaps. i–iii represents him as a "husband" to his people. There is no necessity, however, that we should suppose either prophet to have believed that Yahwe had a bodily form like a man. Anthropomorphic language was unavoidable then, as now, if expression was to be given to the idea of God as a

[1] Hos. ii. 8.
[2] xiii. 14.
[3] xi. 1, xii. 9, xiii. 4 f., xi. 3 f., xii. 10.
[4] ix. 3.
[5] Amos vii. 9, i. 8, v. 21, ix. 8.
[6] vii. 1, 4–7, viii. 1, ix. 1.
[7] vii. 6.
[8] iv. 2, vi. 8, viii. 7.
[9] Hos. v. 15, xi. 3.

living and active Personality: it is no degradation of the idea.

Both prophets are concerned with the nation, not the individual as such. They have no thought of the fate of the individual except in so far as he is a part of the community. Hence the idea of divine Fatherhood can be conceived of, at best, only in an elementary form. But Hosea's representation of Yahwe is one that tends inevitably towards the thought of his concern for individuals, for Yahwe is a God who loves, and love is essentially a relation between persons.

In the message of Amos fear of punishment is the only motive for a righteous life that is suggested. Yahwe to him is an ethical but not a loving God. The prophet and his God alike appear cold and unfeeling. But this defect in the emotional side of religion is supplied by Hosea, whose language throughout vibrates with passion. He feels that Yahwe is more than a sovereign Lord, demanding obedience to himself, and justice between man and man in his kingdom. Hosea, indeed, bases his teaching on the analogy of the family, not the state. Israel is Yahwe's bride,[1] or his son,[2] and love must, therefore, be an essential element in his character. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." [3] "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." [4] "Go, get a woman beloved of her paramour and an adulteress, even as Yahwe loveth the children of Israel, though they turn unto other gods." [5]

This idea of love as the fundamental relation between God and man is expressed most often by the verb *'āhēbh*,[6] once by the substantive *'ahăbhâ*,[7] and frequently by the substantive *ḥeṣedh*.[8] The last word is difficult to translate. In its range of meaning it is not unlike the Latin *pietas*, but on the whole "love" is the rendering which best expresses the conception. Harper,[9] translating as "leal

[1] Chaps. i–iii. [2] xi. 1. [3] xi. 1.
[4] xi. 4. [5] iii. 1.
[6] אָהַב. Cf. iii. 1, ix. 15, xi. 1, xiv. 5. [7] אַהֲבָה, xi. 4.
[8] חֶסֶד. ii. 21, iv. 1, vi. 4, 6, x. 12, xii. 7 (Heb.).
[9] *Op. cit.*, p. cxlix.

love," says that it represents an act or feeling of dutiful or loyal affection, and that, although the conception is "in one sense multiform (viz. *grace* on the part of Yahwe to Israel, *piety* on the part of Israel to Yahwe, and *love*—equivalent to *humanity*—on the part of one Israelite to another) this multiplicity was lost on the unity of the conception." [1] It is, indeed, the relation which subsists between all the members of the ideal family, and by thus making it the basis of his teaching upon God and man Hosea in a measure anticipates Jesus.

Together Amos and Hosea enunciate the two main principles of Jesus's doctrine of the divine Fatherhood: authority and tenderness. But they fall short of its fullness in that they still limit the fatherly love to a single nation, and do not yet distinguish the individuals within the nation as each and all the objects of the divine care and guidance.

Nor, again, when they threaten with punishment the sinful nation, Yahwe's wayward child or erring bride, do they point out at all clearly the way to repentance and restoration, the means and method of redemption. It is probable *a priori* that at the outset they were not without hope that the utter ruin of the nation might be averted. If otherwise, what adequate motive for their preaching can be suggested? But the bright pictures of hope with which the books of both now end,[2] and which are interspersed in Hosea,[3] are regarded by many scholars as additions by later writers, intended to mitigate the severity of the prophetic messages.[4] They do not lose their value if so regarded, but they have their place elsewhere in the history of thought.

Amos, however, perhaps at an early stage in his ministry, contemplates the conversion of some in Israel. Else why should he plead: "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so Yahwe, the God of Hosts, shall be with you, as ye say. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that Yahwe, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. cl.
[2] Amos ix. 11–15; Hos. xiv.
[3] Hos. i. 10, ii. 1, ii. 14–16, ii. 18–23, iii. 5, xi. 10 f.
[4] Cf. Harper, *op. cit.*

of Joseph." [1] And Hosea's conviction of the invincible love of Yahwe, which yearns over Israel, even while it punishes,[2] carries with it the implicit hope that ultimate reconciliation is possible.[3] But in the outlook of both prophets the immediate outlook is one of doom, certain and inevitable. What lies beyond the judgement they leave in the hand of God, the all-sovereign.

### Summary.

Modern criticism has much reduced the extent of Isaiah's genuine prophecies, but enough remains to make his theology clear. He proclaims Yahwe as a transcendent moral Personality, the Holy One of Israel. In *Isaiah* the term holiness is predominantly ethical. His doctrine is a "practical" monotheism, and he calls the gods of the heathen "nothingness." The solity of Yahwe is not expressly asserted. Isaiah does not refer to Yahwe's work in creation, but finds his activity in history. The language is boldly anthropomorphic, but the prophet insists upon the spirituality of Yahwe. He still regards Yahwe as a national God, not the God of all nations equally. Yahwe's concern is with the nation rather than the individual, but Isaiah's confidence in the providential government of Yahwe is of incalculable importance for religion. Under that government righteousness alone exalts a nation, and elaborate worship, apart from morality, is unacceptable. Isaiah is not a man of great originality, but he gives impressive utterance to a few truths of supreme importance. Micah emphasizes some of the same lessons, and denounces in the same way the union of wickedness and worship.

Hosea and Amos may be considered together. Both confronted a prosperous and corrupt society in which external religion flourished. They maintained that true religion is ethical, a fact practically forgotten in their day. Both denounced the sacrificial cultus as responsible for an unworthy idea of God. Hosea declared the popular worship to be nothing but a worship of Ba'al. Israel had been like an adulterous wife, unfaithful to Yahwe, the covenant God. He condemns the popular image-worship. Both prophets entirely repudiated the sacrificial cultus, and asserted that Yahwe is served in the fulfilment of social duties. The religion of these prophets has been described as ethical monotheism. Amos speaks, indeed, of Yahwe's all-sovereign power, and describes him as the "God of hosts," i.e. the hosts of heaven and earth, of nature and of man. Amos has broken away from the idea of a merely national God, and has reached a practical monotheism; but he does not formulate the doctrine. Hosea is less definite, and, perhaps, assumes the reality of other gods, but he insists that Yahwe will

[1] Amos v. 14 f. [2] Hos. xi. 8. [3] Hos. iii.

tolerate no rivals. Both prophets use anthropomorphisms freely, without implying that Yahwe has physical form. To Amos Yahwe is a righteous but not a loving God. Hosea regards love as the fundamental relation between God and man. Both prophets are concerned with the nation, but Hosea's conception of divine love tends towards a recognition of the religious significance of the individual.

## CHAPTER V

# THE "PRE-PROPHETIC" PERIOD

J and E Documents. The "Pre-Prophetic" Historians: Their Work in the Early Narratives of Kings, Samuel, and Judges.

Hitherto, in tracing backward the idea of God, as it was apprehended by Israel's greatest and most spiritually minded men, we have had the advantage of seeing before us the words (substantially, as we believe, in their original form) in which they uttered their convictions. We have now to enter a period which offers us no such advantage. Religious teachers are not wanting in it, but either they left no record of their message, or else the record has been so worked over in subsequent ages that we cannot be confident that in any given case we now possess the *ipsissima verba*. Inference and conjecture must now hold a larger place in our judgements.

The literary sources that we have at our disposal include (1) the J and E documents of the Hexateuch, which may be dated in the century between 850 and 750 B.C., J being probably the earlier; (2) the collection of narratives of Israel's heroes in the years succeeding the settlement in Canaan, which was made *circa* 700 B.C.,[1] and became the basis of the book of *Judges*; and (3) the early narratives in the books of *Samuel* and *Kings*, especially, in the latter, the biographies of Elijah and Elisha.

All these sources exhibit the same general point of view, and may be drawn on for an account of religious thought in what has been called[2] the "Pre-Prophetic" period, i.e. the two centuries, or longer, preceding the appearance of the earliest writing prophets. It is main-

[1] Burney: *Judges*, p. l.

[2] E.g. by Kautzsch and Harper.

tained, indeed, by many scholars [1] that the two strata of narrative which criticism distinguishes in *Judges* and in 1 *Samuel* i–xii are the continuation of the J and E documents of the Hexateuch. Be this as it may, it is undeniable that we find in them the same theological standpoint.

Our sources reveal to us directly the religious conceptions of the best minds in Israel during the early centuries of the monarchy. But the authors recount the history of their people from its beginning. The motive of their work was a religious one, and their interest is directed primarily to the religious aspect of the history. The picture which they present is in a large measure determined by their own standpoint, for their method is not scientific, nor had they the means or the materials for giving an objective survey of the past.

Yet it is often possible to detect in their picture the authentic outlines of the religion of pre-monarchic days, and moreover, they have incorporated in their own work older documents and traditions, whose ideas they have not fully assimilated to their own. Hence it is possible to infer from our sources, comparatively late as they are, something at least with regard to the idea of God as it existed in more primitive times stretching back to the days of Moses.

Further than that our sources will not carry us. It is with Moses that the history of Israel as a nation begins, the *terminus ad quem* of the present inquiry. We ask then: What is the conception of God's nature and character contained in the literary sources just enumerated?

The prevailing belief is quite definitely henotheism, with monolatry as its practical outcome.

This seems evident, in the first place, from both forms of the Decalogue: that of J in *Exodus* chap. xxxiv, and that of E in *Exodus* chap. xx. The first commandment in J [2] reads: "Thou shalt worship no other god; for Yahwe, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God." In E [3] it reads: "Thou shalt have no other gods before (or beside) me."

[1] E.g. by Budde, Cornill, Moore, Lagrange, Burney.
[2] Exod. xxxiv. 14. [3] Exod. xx. 3.

This is not, in either case, the language of a monotheist. Taken in its natural sense it implies the reality of other gods, whose worship alongside Yahwe is forbidden.

Express statements, moreover, are not wanting. In *Judges* xi. 24 Jephthah sends messengers to the Ammonite king, and after recounting how Yahwe had given the land of Canaan to Israel for a possession, they ask: "Wilt thou not possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess?" Yahwe and Chemosh are here spoken of in similar terms: they are in like relations to Israel and Ammon respectively, and each is supreme in his own land.

> Nothing in the narrative lends colour to the supposition advanced by Davidson [1] that the language of Jephthah is only *ad hominem*.

The championship of Chemosh on behalf of his people is taken as a self-evident fact by the narrator.

Equally clear is the language of 1 *Samuel* xxvi. 19, in which David complains that his enemies have driven him out of the inheritance of Yahwe, "saying, Go, serve other gods." Here again the only natural sense of the words is that the narrator regarded foreign lands as the dominion of other gods, and that to be banished from Canaan was to be cut off from the worship of Yahwe.

This notion is well illustrated by the story of Naaman. The Syrian determines that he will become a servant of Yahwe. But how is he to worship him away from Canaan? The difficulty is solved by bearing two mules' burdens of earth to Syria, so that Naaman even there may worship Yahwe on his own soil.[2] Elisha approves of the expedient, and the narrator adds no word of disapproval. Rimmon is god in Damascus, as Yahwe is in Canaan.

But though Yahwe is thus localized in Canaan, none of the literary sources limits his power to this one land. He calls Abraham in Chaldea and Mesopotamia,[3] and aids him in Egypt; the gentile king of Gerar acknowledges him [4]; he protects Joseph in Egypt [5]; he smites Egypt

[1] *Old Testament Theology*, p. 93.
[2] 2 Kings v. 17–19.
[3] Gen. xi. 28, xii. 1 (J).
[4] Gen. xii. 10–20 (J), xxvi. 28 (J).
[5] Gen. xxxix. 23 (J).

with plagues, and brings forth his people with a mighty arm, thus showing himself more potent than all the gods of Egypt. And Jethro the Midianite confesses: "Now know I that Yahwe is greater than all gods." [1]

Thus, though Yahwe is not yet regarded as the only God, he is exalted above all others. To him the Yahwistic writer attributes the origin of life, and again its universal destruction in the Flood.[2] In these narratives there is certainly an approach to a monotheistic conception; but the idea is not maintained consistently at this level.[3]

Are these approaches to monotheism in the J document in any way due to external influences? We know that the early stories in *Genesis* are closely related to Babylonian mythology. That mythology is, however, grossly polytheistic, and the point of principal interest in J's dealing with the ancient material is his entire rejection of the polytheistic features of the story. Mythological material was certainly used by J, as by other Old Testament writers, but there are no myths now remaining in the document, if we use the term strictly as denoting "a story which pictures the processes of nature as actions of anthropomorphic gods." [4] It is true that the priests of Babylon are said to have attained to a sort of monotheism, but it was merely speculative, and produced by a process of allegory and abstraction, and by the fusion of gods. It had no effect upon the polytheism of the masses.

We have seen that in Israel the approach to monotheism was along quite another line. Not by speculation, but by the practical experience of him as a living and active Person, ever vindicating the law of right, did the Hebrews come to believe in Yahwe as the only God. "A relationship and dependence between the monotheism in Babylon and that in the Bible does not exist; their radically different origin is the basis of the difference." [5] The tendency towards monotheism in the early stories of J may therefore be due to reaction against the polytheism of the myths: other debt in this respect there can be none.

[1] Exod. xviii. 11 (J). [2] Gen. ii. 7, vii. 4.
[3] Cf. Gunkel: *Gottesbegriff in A.T.*
[4] H. P. Smith: *Religion of Israel*, p. 95.
[5] Marti, quoted by Harper: *I.C.C.*, "Amos and Hosea," p. cxvii.

The providential activity of Yahwe is taught with emphasis in all the literature of this period. The divine guidance of Israel's ancestors is set forth in the patriarchal legends, the same guidance of the nation in the history of the Exodus and the wanderings, while in the stories of the heroes by whom Israel's place in Canaan was secured the mighty power of Yahwe is made manifest in the accomplishment of his purpose. Throughout he is exhibited as One whose design for Israel is fulfilled in spite of his people's failures and the opposition of his and their foes.

He is the God of the nation, of the united tribes, their War-God; for it is in war and conquest that the tribes first learned to act as one body. Yahwe is the Leader in battle, and in the very ancient Song of Deborah the inhabitants of Meroz are cursed "because they came not to the help of Yahwe, to the help of Yahwe among the heroes." [1] Israel's wars are "the wars of Yahwe." [2] Hence in the Pre-Prophetic period the title "Yahwe of hosts" refers to him as the leader of Israel in war.

> We have seen that in the next period the "hosts" mean "the hosts of heaven and earth, of nature and of man," but the earlier use of the title is clearly in connexion with Yahwe as the War-God.

The words of David to Goliath give conclusive evidence of this meaning: "I come in the name of Yahwe of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel." [3] The latter phrase is a paraphrase of the former for the understanding of the Philistine champion.[4]

But Yahwe is more than the God of war, he is the God of the land also, the owner of its soil, and the giver of its fruits. The three festivals of the earliest legislative codes [5] are all agricultural: the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of harvest or of weeks, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end, and by these Israel acknowledged Yahwe as the author of all fertility. So it is he who in the days of Elijah gives and withholds the rain,[6] and who causes

[1] Judg. v. 23. [2] Num. xxi. 14 (J).
[3] 1 Sam. xvii. 45. [4] See Kautzsch, *H.D.B.*, v. 636 f.
[5] Exod. xxiii. 14–17 (E); xxxiv. 18, 22 (J);
[6] 1 Kings xvii. 1.

the famine in the reign of David.[1] It was in this character that he was called Ba'al, lord or owner of the land.

The proof of this is found not only in the direct statement of Hosea,[2] but also in the employment of the word as an element in numerous Israelite proper names, in which it is clearly equivalent to Yahwe.[3] This similarity between Yahwe and the Canaanite *Ba'alim*, both in title and functions, led inevitably to the introduction of Canaanite rites into the worship of Yahwe, and gave cause for the complaint of the writing prophets that Israel's cultus was nothing better than idolatry.

The complaint was not without justification; but, as Budde has pointed out,[4] though Ba'al worship had its dangers, it was by no means without its beneficent effects. It acted as a "decomposing re-agent," and to it was due, probably, the comparatively early disappearance of the special cults in Israel, those of the clan and the tribe. By the ninth century the Canaanite *Ba'alim* as such had disappeared. Yahwe had dispossessed them of their land, and had appropriated their sanctuaries. At the same time he had taken on some of their features. This process is described by some, e.g. by Kautzsch, as *syncretism*.

Anthropomorphism prevails in this period in the representation of God; but a pronounced difference exists in this respect between the J and E documents.

In J anthropomorphism is frank and naïve, and it adds many exquisite touches to the narratives. Yahwe walks in the garden in the cool of the day[5]; he himself shuts the door of the ark, when Noah had entered in;[6] he meets Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, appearing in human form and accepting the Patriarch's hospitality;[7] he wrestles with Jacob at Peniel.[8]

In E anthropomorphism, though still present, is restrained. The document records no daylight theophanies, and prefers as a means of revelation the dream

[1] 2 Sam. xxi. 1.
[2] Hos. ii. 16.
[3] Cf. *supra*, pp. 92–95, Part A, Chap. V.
[4] *Religion of Israel*, p. 71.
[5] Gen. iii. 8.
[6] Gen. vii. 16.
[7] Gen. xviii. 1 ff.
[8] Gen. xxxii. 24.

or night-vision,[1] or the voice of an angel from heaven.[2] The whole idea of God is more abstract than that of J—witness the new interpretation given to the divine name Yahwe. E regards the name as unknown to the Israelites in Egypt, and unknown also to the Patriarchs: it is a new revelation to Moses.[3]

Into the question of the origin of the name we need not enter now. Its meaning to the narrator in E is most probably "He who will be" or "will become."[4] "The temper of noble adventure which belongs to faith is here shown to spring out of the very name (i.e. Being) of Yahwe: no one can limit the inexhaustibly fresh possibilities of One so named."[5]

This idea of progressive revelation is implicit in E's presentment of the history of the chosen race. He marks out three stages of development: the polytheism of the early ancestors, who served the gods that were beyond the River;[6] the worship of one God, at whose bidding Abram leaves the home of his fathers,[7] and Jacob puts away the images of strange gods;[8] and the new knowledge of the one God as Yahwe, communicated through Moses.[3] Whatever view is taken of E's theory, his recognition of development is a fact of primary importance. In this matter E is in advance of J.

In brief: comparing E with J, we see that for the former Yahwe is an exalted Personality, further removed from men than the God of J, and working mainly in the sphere of the supernatural. There is both gain and loss, as we pass from the more vivid, though childlike, representation of J to the more reflective form in E. The idea of God gains in majesty of outline, but it loses something of its colour and intimate sense of reality.

Expressions which assign a bodily form to God are, as we have seen, frequent in J,[9] and they are not entirely

[1] Gen. xv. 1, xx. 3, 6, xxi. 12, xxii. 1 ff., xxviii. 10 ff., xxxi. 11, 24, xlvi. 2.
[2] Gen. xxi. 17.
[3] Exod. iii. 13–16.
[4] Cf. McNeile: *Exodus*, p. 22; Davidson: *H.D.B.*, ii. 199. Kautzsch: *E.Bi.*, 3320.
[5] Harford, in Peake's *Commentary*, p. 172.
[6] Josh. xxiv. 13.
[7] Josh. xxiv. 3.
[8] Gen. xxxv. 2–4.
[9] Cf. *supra*, p. 198.

wanting in E, which states that the tables of stone were "the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables."[1] But there are indications that the authors of both documents felt that such a form was in truth inappropriate to the divine Being, and various attempts were made to substitute something more refined in place of this crude primitive notion.

Thus both documents speak of "the Angel"—"of Yahwe" (J), "of God" (E), in contexts where it is clear that no created angel is intended, but a manifestation of God himself. To take one of the many examples: When Moses receives his call at Sinai, "the *Angel of Yahwe* appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." Moses turns aside to see the great sight, and (the narrator proceeds) "*Yahwe* saw that he turned aside to see."[2]

> Cf. *Genesis* xxi. 17, xxxi. 11; *Exodus* xiv. 19; *Judges* vi. 20, xiii. 6, xiii. 9 (all E); and *Genesis* xvi. 7, 9, 10, 11; *Genesis* xxii. 11 and 15; *Exodus* iii. 2; *Numbers* xxii. *passim*; *Judges* ii. 1 and 4, v. 23, vi *passim*, xiii *passim* (all J).

"'The Angel of Yahwe' is originally a form of appearance of Yahwe himself, 'a temporary descent of the latter to visibility,' distinguishable from himself only in so far as it does not represent the full and complete majesty of his being."[3]

It has been suggested recently that the phrase "Angel of Yahwe" may conceal an earlier use of the title "King" as a variant or synonym for Yahwe, i.e. the Hebrew *melek Yahwe* has been deliberately altered by the editors into *mal'ak Yahwe*.[4]

It is acknowledged that at one stage the title Ba'al was applied to Yahwe without offence, while in later days it became restricted to certain heathen deities, and the traces of earlier Hebrew use were covered over by substituting *bōsheth*[5] (shame, abomination) for *ba'al*. In the same way *mal'ak* (angel) may have been substituted for *melek* (king) on account of the use of the latter to designate heathen

[1] Exod. xxxii. 16.
[2] Exod. iii. 2, 4 (J).
[3] Kautzsch: *H.D.B.*, v. 638.
[4] מַלְאַךְ יהוה, מֶלֶךְ יהוה.
[5] בֹּשֶׁת.

gods, e.g. the god of the Ammonites and the god of Tyre.[1]

The theory is not without plausibility, and we know in fact that *melek* was written *mōlek* with the vowels of *bōsheth* to denote abhorrence, as the name of the god to whom children were sacrificed in the valley of Hinnom.[2] This Molek was probably identified by the people with Yahwe, the King.

But such a theory is not to be accepted. In the first place, some of the instances of the usage occur in contexts where there is nothing to suggest the thought of Yahwe as *King* in particular (e.g. the passages in *Genesis*), and secondly, the phrase as a description of Yahwe's manifestation-form is parallel with several similar ones, in which textual corruption is impossible. They are: "the face" (R.V. "presence"), "the glory," and "the name" of Yahwe.[3]

In *Exodus* xxxiii. (JE, a composite passage) Yahwe at first declares that he will not go up with the people, lest he consume them (verse 3), and then (verse 14) he promises: "My Face shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." The Face of Yahwe is, therefore, not identical with his full personal presence, but is its partial representation.[4]

In the later literature, but not certainly in the Pre-Prophetic period,[5] the "Glory of Yahwe" has the same meaning. In *Ezekiel*, in *Isaiah* xl-lxvi, and in P the "Glory" is the visible form in which Yahwe appears. Thus Ezekiel sees upon the cherub-borne throne "the likeness as the appearance of a man,"[6] and immediately he adds: "This was the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of Yahwe."[7] Elsewhere he speaks of the Glory as rising from or mounting upon the chariot, and as leaving and returning to the Temple.[8] In all these places a more primitive anthropomorphism would have thought and spoken of Yahwe himself simply.

[1] T. Nicklin: *Expository Times*, vol. xxxiii. pp. 378 f.
[2] 2 Kings xxiii. 10. [3] פָּנִים, כָּבוֹד, שֵׁם.
[4] Cf. Deut. iv. 37; Ps. xxi. 9, lxxx. 16; Isa. lxiii. 9.
[5] Yet see 1 Sam. iv. 22. [6] Ezek. i. 26.
[7] i. 28. [8] iii. 12, x. 4, x. 18 f., xi. 23, xliii. 2

The Name of Yahwe may in many instances be explained as equivalent to the divine character or sum of attributes, so far as revealed to man, but in others the Name is rather a "personified power placed side by side with the proper person of Yahwe."[1] Thus we have: "The Name of the God of Jacob defend thee,"[2] and "The Name of Yahwe cometh from afar,"[3] and in *Exodus* xx. 24 (E): "At every place where I cause my Name to be remembered, I will come and bless thee."

The four expressions seem, therefore, to be attempts to escape from crude anthropomorphism, and to avoid mention of the bodily form of God. The personification of the Wisdom and the Word, perhaps also of the Spirit, of God in the later literature is analogous.

The moral character of God is clearly portrayed in the literary sources of the Pre-Prophetic period. *Exodus* xxxiv. 6–9 is regarded as an editorial addition to J, but it summarizes well the divine character as displayed in these documents: "Yahwe, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy[4] and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sin: and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation."

The historical records show, indeed, throughout, the power, the love, and the forbearance of God, as well as his hatred of sin. The Flood is the reaction of a righteous God against the wickedness that was in the earth;[5] but it is followed by the covenant of mercy with man, and with every living creature.[6] The stories of the Patriarchs show his protecting care overruling all things for good to them that love him, and uphold a lofty standard of life amid surrounding heathenism. The history of the Exodus is a record of his patience with a rebellious people. In the days of the Judges, though they still rebelled, he

[1] Giesebrecht: *Die A.T. Schätzung des Gottesnamens*, p. 66.
[2] Ps. xx. 1.
[3] Isa. xxx. 27.
[4] חֶסֶד. *Vide supra*, pp. 189 f., Part B, Chap. IV.
[5] Gen. vi. 5. [6] Gen. ix. 12.

sent them deliverers when they cried unto him. And so it goes on; he controls all things, but his power is exercised in righteousness, and tempered with mercy.

The idea of God is, however, not yet completely moralized. His faithfulness to his own goes so far sometimes as to become partiality, e.g. in the reward of Abraham with enhanced prosperity as a result of his duplicity in Egypt.[1] Sometimes his actions are unaccountable, and the narrators have no purpose to suggest, as, e.g., when he first incites David to number the people, and then punishes him for so doing.[2]

> The Chronicler felt difficulty here, and attributes the incitement to Satan.[3]

Again, he hardens Pharaoh's heart in order to give proof of his own power.[4]

> Cf. Ezekiel's frequent phrase: "They shall know that I am Yahwe." [5]

Moreover, it is he who inspires Rehoboam's foolish answer in order that he may establish his word by Ahijah the Shilonite.[6] And, finally, in the stories of the Fall and of the building of the Tower of Babel, jealousy lest man should encroach on divine prerogatives seems to inspire the action of Yahwe.

But in most cases his action is plainly ethical, as in the punishment of David for his treachery to Uriah, and of Ahab for the murder of Naboth.[7] An attempt is even made to trace an ethical purpose in the divine ordering of the destiny of nations, when a justification of the transference to Israel of the land of Canaan is sought in the fact of the wickedness of its inhabitants.[8] We may see here an instance of higher ethical conceptions in E than those of J.

[1] Gen. xii. 10–20 (J). Cf. xx. 1–18 (E) and xxvi. 6–11 (J).
[2] 2 Sam. xxiv.
[3] 1 Chron. xxi. 1.
[4] Exod. iv. 21, x. 1 (J).
[5] Chap. xii. 16 *al.* See *supra*, Part B, Chap. III.
[6] 1 Kings xii. 15.
[7] 2 Sam. xii. 9 f.; 1 Kings xxi. 17 ff.
[8] Gen. xv. 16 (E).

The instance usually quoted, viz. that in E Abraham tells a *half* lie to Abimelech, while in J he tells a whole one to Pharaoh, is not convincing.[1]

From the earliest times, according to all the documents, Yahwe is regarded as the avenger of blood and the guardian of social custom,[2] and calamity is the due reward of sin against him. As between members of the nation appeal is made to the justice of Yahwe. "If a man sin against a man, God doth act as arbiter," declares Eli to his wicked sons.[3]

If *'ĕlōhîm* be rendered "judge" with R.V. marg., the meaning is essentially the same. God then acts by his representative.

But moral obligations extending beyond the limits of the nation are scarcely thought of. Religion is intensely national, and Yahwe is always Israel's God. Indeed, E evinces no interest in foreign nations. J does, but it is for the purpose of establishing the central place and privilege of Israel. A nascent perception of a mission of Israel *in* the world, if not *to* the world, may be discerned in the promise to Abraham,[4] even if we reject the R.V. rendering in *Genesis* xii. 3, xviii. 18, and translate, in accordance with *Genesis* xxii. 18, xxvi. 4, "in thee shall all the families of the earth *bless themselves*."[5] Israel, that is, is to be a standing witness to God's favour and goodness, and other nations will invoke for themselves like blessings.

Nationalism in religion is closely associated with the feeling of the solidarity of the nation. In the period under review the sense of the solidarity of the nation, as of the clan, and of the family, is still very strong.[6] God's promises are for the nation, his judgements are executed upon the nation, children suffer for their fathers' guilt to the third and fourth generation.[7] The full claim of the individual to an independent standing before God is not recognized: the work of Jeremiah and Ezekiel had yet to be done.

[1] Cf. Gen. xx. 1–18 (E), xii. 10–20 (J).
[2] Gen. iv. (J); Exod. xx–xxiii (E).
[3] 1 Sam. ii. 25.
[4] Cf. Harper, *op. cit.*, p. lxxviii.
[5] See *B.D.B.* on בָּרַךְ, Niph'al.
[6] Josh. vii. 24.
[7] Exod. xx. 5, xxxiv. 7.

But over against this we have to set the beautiful examples of individual piety in the stories of the Patriarchs. Very likely tribal history underlies the legends, but, as they come to us from the hand of J or E, they are records of individual experiences and of personal faith. We need to remember this, if we are not to pass an inadequate judgement upon the best Hebrew thought, when we read the prophets of the eighth century, and find them almost wholly concerned with the nation to the exclusion of the individual. Our fragmentary records of their teaching may not have preserved for us the whole of their thought.

In another respect J and E differ markedly from the prophets: they betray no hostility to the sacrificial cultus. E speaks of the Tent of Meeting under the care of Joshua,[1] and of the erection of altars and pillars,[2] and of the covenant sacrifices.[3] J carries back the institution of sacrifice to the earliest times, when Abel offered the firstlings of his flock, and Yahwe looked with favour on him.[4] Both documents bring the Patriarchs to the ancient sanctuaries of Canaan, and in so doing claim them for Yahwe.[5] There is no echo of any strife with Ba'al-worship, and the inference is that when these documents were written the Canaanites had become completely fused with Israel, and Yahwe had dispossessed the Canaanite Ba'al.

In the process, parts of the Canaanite cultus, e.g. the agricultural festivals, had been taken up into the official worship of Yahwe, and were no longer felt as alien elements.

But not all. The bull-worship of the Northern Kingdom is condemned by E.[6] The Decalogue in E forbids "graven images."[7]

> The term used—*peṣel*[8]—is probably here a comprehensive term for all kinds of images.

The older Decalogue of J forbids the more elaborate molten-gods such as were used by the Canaanites.

A lesson which both J and E strive to impress is that

[1] Exod. xxxiii. 7–11.
[2] Gen. xxviii. 18, 23.
[3] Exod. xxiv. 4 ff.
[4] Gen. iv. 4.
[5] Gen. xii. 6, 8, xxi. 33.
[6] Exod. xxxii.
[7] Exod. xx. 4.
[8] פֶּסֶל.

Israel became the people of God by definite acts of divine choice.[1] It was God who called the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and promised to give the land of Canaan to their seed,[2] pledging himself to Abraham by the solemn ritual of a covenant.[3] This pledge gave to Israel its title to the land.

Furthermore, the relation between Israel, as a nation, and its God is based upon the covenant at Sinai.[4] The covenant—*bĕrîth*—implies mutual obligations, though it is not to be regarded as a bargain between two parties meeting upon equal terms. God is the sole author of it, and it comes into being by an act of his grace. The Deuteronomist states expressly what is implicit in the earlier writers: "Yahwe did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; but because Yahwe loveth you, and because he would keep the oath which he sware unto your fathers." [5] Or, as a late Psalmist puts it: "He hath commanded his covenant for ever." [6]

Still, the mutual obligations exist. On the one side is the divine promise, on the other human duties. As to what the latter were, various traditions were current. According to J they were those of the so-called Yahwistic Decalogue in *Exodus* xxxiv—a series of ritualistic commandments. But the familiar Decalogue in *Exodus* xx, which E seems to regard as the basis of the covenant on its human side, is mainly ethical. *Deuteronomy* gives yet another version,[7] and Jeremiah looks forward to an entirely new covenant, which will dispense with all outward precept and ordinance.[8]

Even the earliest form of the covenant duties—the Decalogue of J—is evidently long subsequent to the days of Moses, for its rules have in view a settled agricultural community;[9] but the traditions are unanimous as to the *fact* of the covenant basis of the relation between Yahwe and Israel. The very vagueness of the tradition

[1] Josh. xxiv. (E).
[2] Gen. xii. 1 (J), xv. 18, xxvi. 24 (J), xxviii. 13 (JE).
[3] Gen. xv. 9–12.
[4] Exod. xix. 5, xxiv. 7 f.
[5] Deut. vii. 7 f.
[6] Ps. cxi. 9.
[7] Deut. v. 6–21.
[8] Jer. xxxi. 31.
[9] E.g. Exod. xxxiv. 21

as to the content of the covenant on the side of man had its importance and its value. It made possible the filling of the form of the covenant idea with a changing content in accordance with the development of the ethical and spiritual perceptions of the leaders of Hebrew thought.

But supremely important was the covenant idea itself. It facilitated the escape of Israel's religion from mere naturalism, and from the beginning set it in the path of ethical development. Elsewhere in the Semitic field the bond between god and people was a purely natural one. They formed one indissoluble society, which always had existed, and always must exist, and which was independent of the moral conduct of the people. The god might be offended, he might punish, he might need to be stimulated to beneficent activity by gifts and sacrifices, but he was of necessity on the side of his people in any conflict between them and others.

No doubt such ideas as these were prevalent among the mass of Israelites also, but the remembrance that there was a definite epoch at which Yahwe became the God of Israel, and Israel became his people, and that his promises were not unconditional, served to keep alive in the best minds a sense of duty, which became steadily more ethical until it reached its highest level in Jeremiah. By an act of free choice Yahwe had taken Israel for his people. The bond between him and them was, therefore, moral, not natural. His faithfulness was absolute,[1] but, nevertheless, Israel could break the covenant, and so forfeit his promise.

Such a doctrine is inherent in the covenant idea, though it is not expressly stated in the Pre-Prophetic period. But in Amos and Hosea it has become the text of the prophetic message.

While, then, it is true that with Amos and his successors an altogether new power enters upon the scene,[2] a work of preparation had been going on at least a century before. "The ideas of Yahwe as just and hating sin, as merciful, and as faithful, are the very ideas emphasized respectively by Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah; the representation of him

[1] Num. xxiii. 19.

[2] Cf. Marti, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

as all-powerful and ever-present with his people precedes *Amos* i and ii and Isaiah's Immanuel."

Such is Harper's just summary of the relation of the J document to the prophets of the eighth century.[1] With more hesitation we may accept his further statement[2] that the conception of Israel's mission in the world is found in J, and ultimately develops into the doctrine of the Servant of Yahwe.

SUMMARY.

The literature of the pre-prophetic period reveals directly the conceptions of the early monarchy, but it is possible to infer from it the conceptions of pre-monarchic days. The prevailing belief in the pre-prophetic period is henotheism with monolatry for its outcome. Yahwe is localized in Canaan, but his power is not limited to the land. In J he is the giver and destroyer of all life—an approach to monotheism. This is not, unless by way of reaction, an effect of Babylonian influence. Yahwe is the War God of united Israel. He is also the God of the land, and as such is called Ba'al. He had dispossessed the local Ba'alim, and had incorporated much of their cultus in his own worship. This process (syncretism) had results for good and evil. To it was due the early disappearance of the cults of the family and the clan, but also the introduction of the sensual rites of the gods of fertility into Yahwism. Anthropomorphism in J is frank, in E it is more restrained. Both documents, however, seem to try to avoid excessive anthropomorphism by means of the conception of the Angel of Yahwe, who is not a created angel, but a manifestation-form of Yahwe himself. Similar conceptions are: the Face, the Glory, the Name of Yahwe. The moral character of Yahwe is fully portrayed in the documents of this period. His power, his love, his providence, his hatred of sin are all insisted on; but the idea of God is not yet completely moralized. Yahwe is sometimes partial, sometimes arbitrary. His concern is chiefly with the nation, yet the stories of the Patriarchs are beautiful examples of individual piety. There is no opposition to the cultus, but E by implication condemns the bull-worship of Northern Israel. Both J and E lay stress on the covenant-relation between Yahwe and Israel. Thus they regard the relation between God and man as ethical, not natural.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. lxxviii. [2] *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER VI

## THE "PRE-PROPHETIC" PERIOD—(*continued*).

THE INVASION OF PHŒNICIAN BA'ALISM IN THE NINTH CENTURY B.C. AND THE REACTION OF YAHWISM.
ELIJAH—THE JEALOUSY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF YAHWE.
RECHABITES AND NAZIRITES—THE OLD NOMADIC RELIGION.

WE have now studied the direct evidence of the Pre-Prophetic literature touching the religious conceptions of Israel's teachers in the earlier days of the divided monarchy. We ask next what impulse moved devout men in the ninth century B.C. to write the record of Yahwe's dealings with the fathers, and of his great deeds in the deliverance of the nation from bondage and its settlement in the land of promise.

The impulse was more than a literary one, though it produced some of the most perfect narratives that ancient literature preserves. The aim of the authors is quite plainly a religious and practical one, and the history of the ninth century offers an occasion for their activity and an explanation of its aims.

About the year 876 B.C. Ahab succeeded his father Omri on the throne of Israel. Father and son were able monarchs who sought to increase the power of their kingdom by diplomacy as well as war. They checked the intermittent feud with the Southern Kingdom, and Judah and Israel appear in alliance again, Israel being no doubt the predominant partner. Threatened by the growing power of Syria on the East, Omri revived the traditional policy of David and Solomon, and entered into alliance with the wealthy Phœnician state of Tyre. Ahab was married to Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre.

Political alliance between two peoples in the ancient

Semitic world involved the mutual recognition of each other's gods, and it was fully in accordance with custom when Ahab, married to a Phœnician princess, built an altar and a temple in Samaria for the Ba'al of Tyre, Melkart.[1] In so doing he did no more than Solomon did, nor is it likely that he, any more than Solomon, intended apostasy from the God of Israel. The names of two of his sons and one of his principal servants are compounded with the name of Yahwe,[2] and at the council of war before the expedition against Ramoth Gilead four hundred prophets of Yahwe were present to encourage the king in his fatal enterprise.

Jezebel, however, was a woman of another type than the wives of Solomon. She intervened actively in politics, and demanded something more than mere toleration of her own worship of Melkart. Without crediting her with the design of ousting Yahwe from his own domain, we infer that she demanded at least the public recognition of the Tyrian Ba'al alongside of Yahwe.

This Ahab and the majority of the Israelites were disposed to grant. After all, the Ba'al of Tyre was a deity akin to the Ba'al of Canaan, though as the god of an industrial and commercial people his worship was more elaborate and luxurious than that of the agricultural Ba'al of Canaan. The Canaanite cultus had contributed its share to the prevailing worship of Yahwe at the high places, and probably to the mass of the people Yahwe and the Canaanite Ba'al were indistinguishable. Hence they were ready to "halt between two opinions," [3] i.e. to attempt to combine allegiance to Yahwe and to this new Ba'al, the Melkart of Tyre.

But some Israelites had not settled down to agriculture, and come to regard Yahwe as a God of agriculture, the Ba'al, or Owner, of the soil of Canaan, and in these a fierce reaction was aroused against the undisguised worship of a foreign Ba'al, the Tyrian Melkart.

The leader of these was Elijah. He came from Tishbe of Gilead, the country east of Jordan, where the arable

[1] 1 Kings xvi. 31 f. Aha*ziah*, *Jeho*ram, Obad*iah*.
[3] 1 Kings xviii. 21.

land melts away into the desert, and nomad pastoral people find their homes. Elijah, in appearance and in manner, as well as in habitat, is a typical nomad,[1] and we may confidently infer that his religion retained the earlier conception of Yahwe as the God of Israel's nomad tribes, before the settlement in Canaan had modified that conception by the incorporation with it of the ideas of an agricultural people.

To Elijah, therefore, any assimilation of Yahwe to the Ba'al for whom the court demanded recognition was impossible. The two worships were incongruous, and the relation between the two deities was of necessity hostile. If Yahwe was the God of Israel—and this all acknowledged—then the ardent faith and loyalty of an Elijah could brook no claim of an alien god upon the allegiance of the people. So he presents at Carmel the clean-cut alternatives: "If Yahwe be God, follow him: but if Ba'al, then follow him."[2] The victory remained with Elijah. The invasion of the foreign Ba'al upon Yahwe's territory was checked, to be turned back finally from Northern Israel by Elisha and Jehu, and from the Southern Kingdom by Jehoiada and the Temple priesthood.[3]

It is, therefore, to Elijah that we may attribute the successful vindication of Yahwe as a jealous God, who makes an exclusive claim upon the allegiance of his people. Elijah is the champion of the monolatry which through the labours of the prophets of the next century was at last to develop into monotheism. We may conclude also that, at least in the official religion, the victory of Elijah checked any further assimilation of the worship of Yahwe to the Ba'al cultus in any form.

More than this, in the sphere of worship, Elijah does not appear to have done. He uttered no polemic against images, and the Bull of Beth-el escapes unscathed until the invective of Hosea assails it.

There is, however, another side of Elijah's activity, and another aspect of his conception of God. Yahwe is

[1] 2 Kings i. 8.
[2] 1 Kings xviii. 21.
[3] 2 Kings xi.

not only jealous but righteous also. Monolatry, apart from an ethical demand, could never have developed into monotheism; but the ethical element is essential in Elijah's doctrine.

Ahab, at Jezebel's instigation, seized Naboth's vineyard after the judicial murder of its owner. The prophets of Ba'al and the prophets of a "ba'alized" Yahwe made no protest. But Elijah met the king, as Nathan came to David, and in the name of Yahwe denounced the crime, and threatened punishment.[1] Yahwe, as Elijah knows him, is the upholder of justice between man and man; he will by no means clear the guilty. Above the arbitrary will of the king is the moral law whose author and vindicator is God.

In this again Elijah is the authentic voice of an older Israel, a league of tribes and of free clansmen, in whose eyes a brother's life was sacred, and the tribal god was the avenger of the tribal blood. The old spirit was still strong enough in Israel to resist a king who set himself above law and custom, and we can imagine that Elijah's bold resistance to Ahab's tyranny rallied many to the side of Yahwe as Guardian of the right in Israel, who might have responded slowly to his exclusive claim to the worship of Israel.

Be this as it may, Elijah holds the highest place in the history of religion between Moses and Amos, in that he firmly established these two truths: Yahwe, and he alone, is Israel's God, and Yahwe is a righteous God who vindicates the right.

Elisha's place is secondary. In the spirit of his master he instigates Jehu to the extermination of Ahab's house and the worshippers of the Tyrian Ba'al. Apart from this, he is, like the professional prophets, an organ of nationalism, inspiring the king in his conflicts with the Syrians, and more to Israel in the struggle than its chariots and horsemen.[2]

The outstanding feature of the religious history of the ninth century B.C. is therefore the assertion of the exclusive claim of Yahwe to Israel's allegiance against all rivals.

[1] 1 Kings xxi. 18–20. [2] 2 Kings xiii. 14.

The authors of the J document were in full sympathy with Elijah and his like, and by their pen lent their aid to the public efforts of Yahwe's champions, telling the long story of his dealings with the fathers, and his leading of the people from the earliest days. An incidental proof of the sympathy of J with the party of Elijah is to be seen in the unmistakable preference evinced for the nomadic over the agricultural life. Abel's offering from the flock is accepted, while Cain's from the produce of the soil is rejected.[1] The beginnings of civilization are attributed to the descendants of the outlawed Cain,[2] and evil follows upon the first planting of the vine.[3] The honoured forefathers of the race were shepherds: "Thy servants have been keepers of cattle from our youth even until now," is the answer Joseph bids his brethren give to Pharaoh's question, "What is your occupation?"[4]

It seems reasonable, therefore, to connect the J document with the contemporary reaction against the worship of Ba'al, and with the prophetic summons to the people to return to the pure religion of Yahwe, as it had been practised in the old nomadic days.

Besides Elijah and his followers there were others who made independent protest against the syncretism which had changed the primitive conception of Yahwe into that of an agricultural deity, adored in rites borrowed from the Canaanites. Such were the Rechabites and, probably, the Nazirites.

Jehonadab the son of Rechab appears upon the scene, when Jehu is exterminating the house of Ahab, and joins with him in the massacre of the worshippers of Ba'al. Jehonadab is evidently, like the new king, a fanatical adherent of Yahwe, full of zeal, albeit that zeal is not according to righteousness, as Hosea was to see and declare a century later.[5]

The Rechabites persisted as a clan far on into the history of Judah. In the days of Jehoiakim, Yahwe commanded Jeremiah the prophet to take the Rechabites to a chamber in the Temple and to give them wine. They

[1] Gen. iv. 4 f. (J).
[2] Gen. iv. 16–24 (J).
[3] Gen. ix. 20–24 (J).
[4] Gen. xlvi. 33 f.
[5] Hos. i. 4.

refused it, because Jehonadab ben-Rechab their ancestor had commanded them not to drink wine, build houses, sow seed or plant vineyards, or possess any of these things, but to dwell in tents. These commands they had strictly observed, and they had come into Jerusalem only because of the armies of the Chaldeans and the Syrians.[1] Yahwe bids the prophet ask the Jews if they will not receive the lesson.[2]

The point of interest for us is that the clan of the Rechabites had continued faithful to the traditional ideal of a nomadic life. They were a living protest against an agricultural society and all that was involved in it—the cult of the gods of fertility, and the licentious rites associated with it in all Semitic lands.

Two facts seem plain with regard to the Rechabites who allied themselves with Jehu in the ninth century: they were ardent followers of Yahwe, and they maintained the nomadic life of the wilderness among a people which had now settled down to agriculture. We may see in them, therefore, religious conservatives whose conception of Yahwe went back to the days of the wanderings, when Moses united a group of pastoral tribes into an alliance in the name of Yahwe. For the Rechabites did not trace their origin to the stock of Jacob: they were Kenites, i.e. a branch of the widespread Midianites, and they appear to have accompanied the Israelites into Canaan, and ultimately were incorporated into the tribe of Judah.[3]

The evidence we possess with regard to the Nazirites is less definite and consistent; but it points to the conclusion that they were in a special sense devotees of Yahwe, bound to his service by a vow. The law regulating this vow is given in the Priestly Code,[4] and is in its present form post-Exilic, but no doubt it is derived from ancient tradition. Its provisions are three: (1) the Nazirite must abstain from wine and all other products of the grape, including even the fresh and dried fruit; (2) he must allow the hair of his head to grow; (3) he must not come near a dead body, lest he incur defilement.

[1] Jer. xxxv. 1–11. [2] Jer. xxxv. 12–19.
[3] See 1 Chron. ii. 55; Judg. i. 16; iv. 11; Exod. iii. 1.
[4] Num. vi. 1–21.

In pre-Exilic times the only clear example of a Nazirite is Samson, who according to the command of the Angel of Yahwe is destined to be a "Nazirite of God from the womb." [1] The rule of abstinence from wine is laid upon his mother even before the birth of the child, and may be assumed to be equally binding upon the child himself. Also, no razor is to come upon his head. Two of the rules laid down in *Numbers* are, therefore, prescribed in the case of Samson.[2] That the former was not kept by Samson need not affect our view of the institution in his time, for he was obviously a person impatient of all rule.

It is possible that Samuel is another instance of a life-long Nazirite. He was consecrated to Yahwe from childhood, and his mother Hannah vows that a razor shall not come upon his head. The Septuagint Version adds to the vow: "and wine and strong drink he shall not drink." [3] This, if original, would equate the vow with that implied in the case of Samson.[4] The Hebrew text of *Ecclesiasticus* [5] calls Samuel a Nazirite.

The only other allusion to Nazirites before the Exile is in *Amos* ii. 11 f. Here Yahwe says: "I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazirites. . . . But ye gave the Nazirites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not." The inference is that the Nazirites, like the prophets, stand in specially close relation to Yahwe, and that the prominent feature of their mode of life is abstinence from wine. Therefore, comparing the Nazirites with the Rechabites, we seem justified in drawing the conclusion that they too were devotees of Yahwe, upholding the nomadic ideal, and withdrawing so far as was possible from an agricultural society with its worship of Yahwe as Ba'al of the fertile land. Rechabites and Nazirites are, therefore, connecting links between "pre-prophetism" and the religion of nomadic days, between Elijah and Moses.

[1] Judg. xiii. 5.
[2] See Burney: *Judges*, p. 344. *Contra* Cooke: *Judges*, p. 132.
[3] *Καὶ οἶνον καὶ μέθυσμα οὐ πίεται.*
[4] See Burney, *op. cit.*, p. 343. He does not regard the LXX addition as part of the original text.
[5] xlvi. 13.

SUMMARY.

In the ninth century political alliance with Tyre led to the invasion of Israel by the cult of the Phœnician Ba'al. The majority in Israel, accustomed to the worship of Yahwe in rites derived from Canaanite Ba'alism, acquiesced. A minority, faithful to the purer religion of nomadic days, resisted. The leader was Elijah, from the pastoral country of Gilead, who successfully asserted the jealousy of Yahwe and his exclusive claim to the worship of Israel. Further, in resistance to the tyranny of Ahab, Elijah maintained the righteousness of Yahwe. The authors of the J document were in sympathy with Elijah, and evince a like devotion to nomadic ideals. The Rechabites and Nazirites were also devotees of Yahwe, and in revolt against agricultural life with its concessions to Ba'alism.

## CHAPTER VII

# MOSES AND THE PROCLAMATION OF YAHWE AS THE GOD OF ISRAEL

The Kenite Hypothesis.
The Covenant: its Actual and Potential Significance.
The Relation between Yahwe and Israel—the relation an Ethical One from the Beginning.

Our inquiry has now brought us within sight of the religion of the nomadic tribes of the days of the wandering. All Hebrew tradition converges upon Moses as the leader of a new movement among the tribes, and as the first legislator of a new commonwealth. We have to ask how far tradition corresponds with actual fact. What was the real place of Moses in the history of Israel? What was the interpretation of the idea of God proclaimed by him?

The latter question is meaningless until the former has been answered. That Moses was a really existing man may be assumed now without much fear of contradiction. "Had his name perished and his very existence been blotted out from the memory of his countrymen, we should have been obliged to postulate such a personality as his." [1] It is true that the earliest documents to which we can assign a date come from a period four centuries later than the probable date of Moses. It is true also that his story has grown by legendary accretion. But we have to deal with legend, not myth, and it is now generally admitted that legends rest on a basis of historical fact which patient investigation may, in many cases, lay bare.

In the case of Moses a number of facts are attested by the convergent evidence of the Judæan narrative (J),

[1] Addis: *Hebrew Religion*, p. 61.

the Ephraimite narrative (E), and the earliest writing prophets, Amos and Hosea. They are: that Israelites were in bondage in Egypt, that a deliverer, named Moses, led them forth from Egypt, and brought them to the sacred mountain Sinai (Horeb in E and D), where a covenant was made with the God whose name was proclaimed as Yahwe by Moses, and that by this covenant Yahwe became the God of Israel, and Israel the people of Yahwe.

> The theory of Winckler, elaborated by Cheyne,[1] that there has been an extensive confusion in the Old Testament between Egypt (Miṣraim) and the North Arabian land Muṣri, and that in fact Israelites were never in bondage in Egypt at all, is to be rejected. There are cases in which the confusion is possible, but not in so fundamental a point as this. A textual corruption so radical as is assumed by Cheyne would make the Old Testament valueless as a historical record, whereas a reasonable criticism where objective tests can be applied confirms much of its data.

Most critics are willing to accept the facts about Moses just outlined. Beyond these facts we must have recourse to hypotheses, for which probability may be claimed, but not historical certainty. Yet we may remember that, as Loisy says, "a plausible conjecture is always worth more than a false assertion, even when it is traditional." [2]

With regard to Moses' achievement in the sphere of religion, the first question that arises is: Was Yahwe the God of the fathers, or was he newly revealed to Israel through Moses at the time of the Exodus?

As to this there is divergence in the traditions preserved in the Old Testament. According to the Judæan document, J, the name Yahwe had been known from the time of the grandson of Adam,[3] while the Ephraimite document, E, contains a distinct account of the revelation of the name as new to Moses,[4] and P states further that God was not known to the Patriarchs as Yahwe, but as El-Shaddai.[5]

[1] *E.Bi.*, col. 3161 ff.
[2] *Religion of Israel*, p. xxvii.
[3] Gen. iv. 26.
[4] Exod. iii. 1–14.
[5] Exod. vi. 2–12.

But in the ancient East, at a time when men believed in a plurality of gods, the introduction of a new name meant the introduction of a new deity. To Moses, therefore, according to the tradition followed by E, it was a new-found God who revealed himself at Horeb, through some wonderful experience, we may well believe, which underlies the legend of the burning bush.

Who was this new God, Yahwe? It is a plausible hypothesis that he was the God of the Kenite-Midianites among whom Moses was then sojourning. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was priest of Midian, and the documents seem to assume that he was a Yahwe-worshipper. Moses, then, as a refugee among the Midianites, became a client (*gēr*)[1] of Yahwe, and was convinced of his mighty power. Filled with all a convert's ardour, he returned to his brethren in Egypt, stirred them to resistance, and promised them deliverance by the help of Yahwe. The promise was fulfilled, and Yahwe brought the tribes out of Egypt "with a mighty hand and outstretched arm." Then Moses led them to Sinai (Horeb), i.e. to the habitat of the Kenite-Midianites, and Jethro, the priest of Midian, again appears upon the scene. When Moses recounts to him the story of the great deliverance, Jethro blesses Yahwe, and declares: "Now I know that Yahwe is greater than all gods."[2] It is his own God, surely, in whose victory Jethro triumphs.

Next Jethro offers sacrifice, and Aaron and the elders of Israel join with him in the sacrificial feast.[3] Apparently, Jethro as priest of Yahwe initiates the Israelite tribes into the worship of the new deity. Moses is not mentioned at this point, perhaps because he had already been initiated. After this followed the covenant between Yahwe and Israel (Jethro is not present now), and this is sealed by another sacrifice, Moses being the ministering priest.

Yahwe is now by covenant the God of Israel, and Israel the people of Yahwe, but before this he had been the tribal god of the Kenites.

[1] גֵּר See Robertson Smith: *Religion of the Semites*, ed. 2, pp. 78–80.
[2] Exod. xviii. 8–11 (JE). [3] Exod. xviii. 12 (E).

This interpretation of the traditions of the Exodus deprives the stories of the Patriarchs of full historical reality, though not, of course, of religious value and psychological truth. No nation, however, really knows by tradition its own primal origin, and no nation is in fact descended from a single ancestor. Nations arise by the amalgamation of tribes and clans. The patriarchal legends are either tribal history in the guise of individual history,[1] or, more probably, they are the ideal reflexion of the nation Israel thrown back upon the past—Israel as it should have been in hoary antiquity.

Budde concludes:[2] "So only one fact remains from this whole tradition, namely that the God who led Israel out of Egypt had been a stranger to it up to that time. That the forefathers had known him under this or that name is a palliating addition of the philosophizing historian."

König, in criticizing this so-called Kenite hypothesis, urges that it is finally wrecked because it lacks the pre-supposition necessary to explain the hold which the God who revealed himself to Moses obtained upon the people dwelling in Egypt. Thus: "This necessary pre-supposition was, however, the *Identity of the Person* of the God who revealed himself to Moses and the God of the Patriarchs."[3]

Moses, that is to say, would not have succeeded in rallying the tribes to himself, in the name of a new God, but only in the name of the God of the forefathers.

The argument is not conclusive. May not the case be put thus? The Israelites were held in bondage by the Egyptians, and no hope of escape seemed possible. They would feel, according to primitive ways of thinking, that their subjection was proof of the inferiority of their god, or gods, to the gods of Egypt. Only the hope of the aid of a new and mightier god could rouse them from their dejection. Such a hope was imparted to them when

[1] Cf. Driver: *Genesis*, p. liv ff.
[2] *Religion of Israel to the Exile*, p. 16.
[3] "Diese notwendige Grundvoraussetzung war aber die *Identität des Person* des Gottes, der dem Mose sich enthüllte, und des Gottes der Patriarchen." *Gesch. der Rel. Isr.*, § 168.

Moses appeared as the prophet of Yahwe, the God of Sinai, whose mighty power was manifest in the earthquake, the lightning, and the storm.

Budde's statement quoted above must not, however, be taken in too general a sense. It applies strictly only to the tribes which Moses led out of Egypt. But the confederation formed at Sinai, and the nation of Israel of later days, contained other elements than these. A large number of scholars now hold that it was mainly the Joseph tribes who were in Egypt, but that Asher and Gad, for example, lived continuously in Canaan, and that in Judah were incorporated many North Arabian clans, such as the Kenites, Calebites, Jerahmeelites, which had never sojourned in Egypt.

Burney [1] suggests that Yahwe was originally an Amorite deity, whose name is to be recognized in Babylonian documents as early as 2700 B.C., and that the tribes of Asher and Gad may have brought his worship westward into Canaan many years before the Exodus. He inclines, indeed, to identify them with some of the invading Ḫabiri mentioned in the Tell-el-Amarna correspondence. Similarity of religion, if not also of cognate blood, would have drawn them into alliance with the tribes who advanced into Canaan under Joshua. To the tribes of this earlier settlement Yahwe would be the God of their forefathers, and no consciousness would be retained of a time when he was not.

We need not invoke the aid of the "philosophizing historian" to account for the tradition in these tribes of the immemorial antiquity of the worship of Yahwe. So also the assumption of the Judæan document, J, that the knowledge of Yahwe existed in primal days is based on a fact, for the tribe of Judah included many clans among whom Yahwe was indeed the ancestral God.

These necessary qualifications do not, however, weaken the main argument for the Kenite hypothesis that the God in whose name Moses led the people out of Egypt, and with whom the covenant was made at Sinai, was previously the tribal God of the Kenites.

[1] Commentary on *Judges*, pp. 243 ff. and *J.T.S.* vol. ix, pp. 321 ff.

For centuries after, Sinai was regarded as the home of Yahwe, even when it lay beyond Israel's borders, and Yahwe himself had come to be recognized as the Lord of Canaan. In the days of Deborah he came from Sinai to bring victory to his people, coming forth out of Seir, and marching out of the field of Edom.[1] Elijah, after his contest with Ba'al, journeys to Horeb the mount of God, where Yahwe reveals himself amid the accompaniments of the storm, the fire, and the earthquake.[2] The writer of the Blessing of Moses tells how "Yahwe came from Sinai and rose from Seir unto them."[3] Even in the later poetry, long after Zion had come to be regarded as Yahwe's abode, the old tradition continued. In *Psalm* lxviii. 4, Yahwe is the God that rideth through the deserts, and in the post-Exilic psalm which now stands in the third chapter of *Habakkuk*, God "comes forth from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran."[4]

This deeply rooted tradition as to Yahwe's dwelling-place confirms the hypothesis that he was the God of the Kenites, and probably of other tribes in the same region, before the Israelites under Moses' leadership entered into covenant with him at Sinai, and thenceforward became his people.

What, then, can be said about the nature and character of this God? Nothing is to be gained by attempts to interpret the name Yahwe etymologically. The widespread currency of the name makes it doubtful whether it is derivable from any Hebrew root, and, if it be, the interpretation offered in *Exodus* iii. 15 may be of no more value than many others, obviously wrong, given by Old Testament writers to explain ancient names. The form of the name suggested to the author, or editor, of E a connexion with the verb *haya*,[5] "to be," or "to become," and this casts light on the conception of God held in certain circles in Israel about 750 B.C.; but it gives no clue to the meaning, if any, attached to the name at the time of the Exodus. No explanation

[1] Judg. v. 4. [2] 1 Kings xix. 8–12.
[3] Deut. xxxiii. 2. Time of Jeroboam II, 785–745 B.C.
[4] Hab. iii. 3. [5] חָיָה.

offered by modern scholars attains an adequate degree of probability.[1]

All that we can say with anything like confidence is that Yahwe, when accepted by Israel, was the God of a nomad tribe of the desert, and his nature and character must be sought in the religious conceptions of the Kenites, not in those of later Israel. The researches of Wellhausen and Robertson Smith have shown us what these conceptions were, and an attempt has been made in the preceding pages to set forth some of them.

Barton [2] has tried to show that "in all probability the Yahwe of the Kenites was developed like Ramman, Hadad, and most other Semitic deities, out of the primitive mother-goddess."

This development may have taken place, and Barton's conjecture is a plausible one, not lightly to be set aside without examination; but the discussion of it would lead beyond the limits of our present subject. The question immediately before us is: How could the God of the Kenites, accepted as the God of a confederation of nomads which was afterwards welded into the nation Israel, become in course of time the God of the prophets? How could there be in Israel an evolution of the idea of God such as occurred in no other Semitic people, though the starting-point is apparently the same? If Yahwe was at the outset not essentially different from Hadad or Ramman or Chemosh, how comes it that these and other names once greater, are forgotten except by students, while Yahwe's name has not merely survived among his people Israel, but he himself is identified with the eternal and almighty Creator by the most highly civilized nations of the world?

Budde [3] finds the way to a solution of the problem in the Latin proverb: "When two do the same thing, it is

[1] On suggested meanings of יהוה see *B.D.B.*; König, *op. cit.*, pp. 157–160; Kautzsch, *H.D.B.*, v. 625 f.; Barton, *Semitic Origins*, pp. 282 ff.

[2] *Semitic Origins*. See especially chap. vii, p. 279–280. Canney (*Expository Times*, April 1923) argues that the name Shaddai was originally the name of a mother-goddess, being connected with *shad* (breast). The form is intensive with a feminine ending (*ai*). Cf. Sarai —Sarah.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

not the same." Kenites and Israelites alike worshipped Yahwe, but with a fundamental difference. To the Kenites he was bound by kinship. The union between him and them was inseparable, existing in the very nature of things; it was not an ethical union, for this of necessity transcends nature, and involves the possibility of free personal action. But Israel took Yahwe for God by an act of choice, which remained ever memorable in the consciousness of the nation. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." So says Joshua to the tribes in the E document.[1] Moreover, Israel's choice of Yahwe was felt to pre-suppose his antecedent choice of the people.

Here, then, is a relation which is essentially an ethical one, capable of serving as a basis for an ethical progress in the knowledge of God. Yahwe was not for Israel an hereditary god, whose favour might be always counted on in virtue of his kinship with his people. From the beginning he was no mere tribal god, whose nature and character might be assumed as adequately known. He had, indeed, shown himself mighty in delivering the people from Egypt; but he was as yet in part an unknown God, and fresh revelations of his will might be expected. Thus thoughtful minds in Israel were kept in reverent and watchful expectancy, and the question: What does Yahwe require? was not to be answered with the easy self-complacency of the worshippers of a tribal god or a national god. Yahwe was not compelled by his very nature to be Israel's helper; and when, through the changing experiences of national life, he proved himself to be such, he awakened in the hearts of his true servants the feelings of gratitude and devotion, as well as the fear lest his favour should be forfeited by failure to fulfil his requirements.

Moreover, as the God of a confederacy Yahwe must have come to be conceived as having a moral character. A merely tribal god is the guardian of the custom of the tribe, but this has little moral content and does not make for moral progress. But co-operation between tribes is not governed in the same way by ancestral custom. In

[1] Josh. xxiv. 15.

so far as it exists, it depends on moral factors. Yahwe, therefore, as the God of all the Israelite tribes is more than the vindicator of custom; he is the guardian also of a nascent morality. If the moralizing of the character of Yahwe was comparatively slow in Israel, this may have been due in part to the strength of tribal feeling, and the hesitating progress made towards national unity.[1]

In any case, it seems best to derive the ethical content of the idea of God in Israel from the fundamental *relation* between Yahwe and his people—a relation not of nature nor of necessity, but of free choice on both sides. It is this relation that is the essential factor rather than the actual content of the idea at the outset.

The alternative to this hypothesis is the supposition that Moses not only united the Israelite tribes by covenant with a new God, but that he also revealed that God in a new, an ethical character. It may have been so, and it is unsafe to set narrow bounds to the advance in thought, especially religious thought, which may be made through the medium of a single great personality.

But it may be asked: What probability is there that the tribes were capable of receiving and transmitting such a revelation, had it been made? The earliest legal code, that of J, still contains no precepts of an ethical kind. Attempts to prove the Mosaic origin of the mainly ethical Decalogue of E are not convincing, and the most that can be said for them is that they show that it is possible that a briefer and less ethical form may go back as far as his time. Kautzsch, after a full discussion, concludes:[2] "The Mosaic origin of some rudimentary form of the Decalogue (apart from the command against images) does not appear to be absolutely excluded, but we must be careful to refrain from pronouncing a more definite judgement."

It seems better, therefore, to seek the origin of that ethical character which distinguishes the higher religion of Israel, not in the substance of Moses' teaching concerning the nature and character of Yahwe, but rather in the

[1] See books of Judges and Samuel *passim*.
[2] *H.D.B.*, v. 633 f.

unique covenant relation which united the tribes of Israel to their God. "Israel's religion became ethical because it was a religion of choice and not of nature, because it rested on a voluntary decision which established an ethical relation between the people and its God for all time."[1]

SUMMARY.

Moses is to be regarded as the founder of Israel's religion. The outline of his life is historical. At Sinai Yahwe was revealed to the tribes as a new deity. Previously he was the God of the Kenites, and Moses became his client while in Midian. Moses led the tribes from Egypt in the name of Yahwe, and united them to Yahwe by the covenant. This Kenite hypothesis disregards the stories of the Patriarchs as historical accounts of the origins of Israel. Yahwe was not the God of the forefathers of the tribes whom Moses led out of Egypt. But not all the tribes who united to form the Israelite confederacy sojourned in Egypt. Judah contained Kenite and other North Arabian elements for whom Yahwe was really the God of their forefathers. Hence the Judæan document (J) is justified in tracing back the worship of Yahwe to primal days. Assuming that Yahwe was the God of the Kenites before he became the God of Israel, we conclude that originally his nature and character were supposed like those of other Semitic deities of nomadic tribes. The reason for the unique development of the idea of God in Israel is to be sought in the fact that Israel was united to Yahwe by an act of free choice on his part and theirs. The relation between them was thus from the first an ethical one. Herein lies the differentia between the religion of Israel and those of its neighbours—not in the substance of Moses' teaching about Yahwe.

[1] Budde, *op. cit.*, p. 38. Cf. Cornill: *Culture of Ancient Israel*, p. 64.

## CHAPTER VIII

# SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT FROM THE EXODUS ONWARD

"ISRAEL'S religion became ethical because it was a religion of choice, and not of nature, because it rested on a voluntary decision which established an ethical relation between the people and its God for all time."

Better words than these could hardly be found to describe the beginning of that long development which, from its starting-point at Sinai, continues through the centuries till it culminates in the teaching of Jesus.

We may regard it as the evolution of the idea of God in the minds of the best of Israel's sons, or as the self-revelation of God in proportion as his people were prepared to receive the knowledge of him in fuller measure. These are but two ways of regarding the same fact.

Hitherto we have endeavoured to trace back this evolution step by step from the later to the earlier times. In the following brief summary we shall reverse the process and move forward from the beginning, thus presenting in another way the results obtained in our study.

We see first the God of a group of nomad tribes under the leadership of Moses, a God austere in character as One who comes from the rugged storm-swept heights of Sinai to lead in war his new-found people—his by solemn covenant.

Then in Canaan new features accrue to the idea his people have of him, as they worship in him the beneficent giver of the fruits of the land. But while the idea is enriched by the experience of a settled life, the simple

worship of nomadic days is corrupted as well as enlarged by the influence of the surrounding Canaanites.

Some there are in Israel, however, who, like the Rechabites and Nazirites, remain true to the older and purer, if meagre, conception of the Yahwe of Sinai, and when true religion and sound morality alike are threatened by an alien god and a despotic king, another great personality arises in Elijah, who proclaims with victorious power the jealousy of Yahwe and his exclusive claim to Israel's worship. Nay, more, the God of Elijah is One whose covenant with Israel is founded in righteousness, and who will shake the foundations of the state rather than suffer wickedness to flourish in high places.

These lessons are enforced and developed in the historical writings of the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., which tell the story of God's providential governance of his people, the story of his goodness, his faithfulness, and his work of discipline.

Then, once more, when the luxury and corruption of a prosperous age threaten to overwhelm pure religion, great men are raised up: an Amos to proclaim the all-sovereign power and the impartial justice of God; a Hosea to tell of his love, wounded by the faithlessness of the people he had chosen; an Isaiah to declare his transcendent holiness.

All these warned the nation of the inevitable judgement of a holy God upon unrighteousness, and summoned to repentance; but the warnings were unheeded, till at last Jeremiah well-nigh despairs of the future of the nation, and sees the old covenant of Sinai ready to perish. Yet in him is born the hope of a new covenant made not only with the nation but with the individual, and written by God in the hearts of men.

The doom foreseen by the prophets fell, the state was destroyed, and Israel was once more carried into bondage. But Yahwe waxed the greater in the minds of his true servants, as his just chastisements brought his people to the dust. Ezekiel kept alive among the exiles the idea of a holy God, exalted in all-powerful might above the nations, a faithful God, who by his Spirit would revive his people

from the grave of exile, a just God who would deal with every man according to his works, and would not punish the son for his father's sin.

Then followed the unknown prophet of hope and comfort, who gathered into a focus the thoughts of his forerunners, and proclaimed the sole and unique deity of Yahwe, the Creator of heaven and earth, the all-knowing Ruler of the nations, the loving Saviour and Guide of his people.[1]

Among the words of this prophet the Songs of the Suffering Servant were given to Israel, words wherein was enshrined the new ideal of a missionary people which should bring to the nations the knowledge of a God who was God of all alike, and who used even the affliction of his own people to accomplish his universal purpose for mankind. By this prophet, therefore, at the end of the Exile, an idea of God is set forth that was not unworthy of Jesus himself.

In the centuries that intervened this idea was illuminated from many sides by prophets, sages, and psalmists; but its outline remained firm and clear. Some, e.g. the apocalyptists, emphasized the divine transcendence, others, like the Wisdom writers and some of the Psalmists, God's personal relations with individual men, and so approached the thought of the divine Fatherhood.

At last, the varied and partial presentations of the idea of God are fused into unity by the mind of Christ, and the transition is completed from the Yahwe of Sinai to the God and Father of all mankind, who is Spirit, Light, Life, and Love.

[1] "The whole prophetic theology is an attempt to rise from a physical and local to a spiritual and universal conception of God." Wyatt Tilby: *Evolution of Consciousness*, p. 251.

# PART C

# LEGALISTIC IDEAS OF GOD

## CHAPTER I

# THE CONTENT OF THE IDEA OF GOD IN LEGALISM

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGALISM TRACED BACKWARD THROUGH THE PRIESTLY CODE, EZEKIEL, THE HOLINESS CODE, AND DEUTERONOMY

Of the three interpretations of the idea of God which we distinguished at the beginning of this inquiry, two have now been traced through the centuries intervening between the times of Jesus and those of Moses. It remains for us to consider the form which the idea took in the minds of those whose religion was shaped chiefly by the Law—to trace the idea of God under the influence of Legalism.

It will not be necessary in dealing with this portion of our subject to traverse again in detail the long course of the history of religion in Israel. Much that would be relevant here has already been said incidentally in the effort to elucidate the prophetic doctrine in its later stages. Moreover, it is generally admitted that the idea of God in Pharisaic Judaism is in the main that of the prophets, but with modifications of detail and differences of emphasis which profoundly affected the resultant religious disposition. To these modifications and this emphasis it will be necessary to give attention later.

But it may be assumed here that the legalists, equally with the prophets, assert the sole Godhead of Yahwe, his all-sovereign power, his spirituality, and his righteousness; that they insist on the sin and folly of idolatry; and that they affirm as the basis of practical religion the covenant relation between God and his people, God's choice of Israel and Israel's consequent duty of love and obedience.

The primary characteristic of legalism is that it seeks the knowledge of God through the mediation of a written revelation. Hence the authoritative Scriptures are regarded as the voice of God, regulating both thought and conduct. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and light unto my path." [1]

The legalism of the first century A.D. was founded upon the Levitical parts of the Pentateuch, interpreted and applied casuistically by the Rabbis. Subsequent writings are of small account in comparison with the overwhelming authority of the "Law of Moses," and even the Scriptures of the Prophets within the Canon held a secondary place.

The book of *Baruch* [2] gives classical expression to the reverence felt for the Law: "This is our God, and there shall none other be accounted of in comparison of him. He hath found out all the way of knowledge, and hath given it unto Jacob his servant, and to Israel that is beloved of him. Afterward did she appear upon earth, and was conversant with men. This is the book of the commandments of God, and the law that endureth for ever: all they that hold it fast are appointed to life; but such as leave it shall die." [3] In this passage the law is the final manifestation on earth of the wisdom of God himself, bestowing salvation on all who observe it.

Among the *Sayings of the Fathers* we read: "On three things rests the world: on the Law, the cultus, and the rendering of good deeds." [4]

This exaltation of the Law led finally to the consequence that it was regarded as existing before the Creation, and as being the daughter of God.[5]

From the time of its promulgation by Ezra and Nehemiah, the Law, in its final formulation in the Priestly Code, held an almost undisputed sway over the religious and social life of the small churchlike community of the Restoration. The voice of the prophets was silent or discredited,[6] owing no doubt to the abandonment by the

[1] Ps. cxix. 105.
[2] Dated first century A.D. in its present form. See Charles in *E.Bi.*
[3] Baruch iii. 35–iv. 1. [4] *Pirqe Aboth*, i. 2.
[5] Cf. Box and Oesterley: *Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, p. 137.
[6] Zech. xiii. 2–6.

better teachers of the older forms of prophecy for the exposition of the written Word. The scribe had taken the place of the prophet, whose function appeared to be superfluous and even presumptuous, when the divine will was believed to be fully declared in the sacred Law. "No prophet must set forth anything new, which is not grounded in the Law." [1]

The result was that men of prophetic spirit were driven to pseudonymity, so that they set forth their teaching for the present and their hopes and ideas for the future in the name of worthies of old time,[2] going, as it were, behind the Law. It would, of course, be unjust to describe the method of these, the apocalyptic writers, as literary fraud, for they are sincere in their purpose, and anxious by any means to find a hearing for their message. But they lose the direct force and spontaneity of the prophets.

The movement towards ethical monotheism and universalism in the prophets from the eighth century B.C. to the close of the Exile has been described as "the flood-tide of spiritual religion" in Israel.[3] But the flood was followed by an ebb, and the reaction took the form of a return to a legal and ceremonial religion in an intensified and amplified form. "It may be considered," says Dr. Foakes-Jackson, "almost as a law in religious history that no sooner has a principle become generally accepted than, as if to show the impossibility of satisfying the cravings of the heart, a reaction occurs in the opposite direction." [4]

In nature the ebb begins only when the flood has passed its high-water mark, but in the movements of religious thought in Israel we can see the reaction preparing long before the onward movement has spent its force. In plain words, the legalism of the Priestly Code has a history behind it, stretching out over two centuries. Behind the Code stands the great figure of Ezekiel, prophet and priest.

We have already dealt with the impulse that he gave

[1] *Bemidhbar rabba*, chap. x.
[2] E.g. Enoch.
[3] Galloway: *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 136.
[4] *The Parting of the Roads*, p. 23.

to the flowing tide of prophetic thought ; but his influence in relation to the Law is more important. It might be said that, taking a view of historic probability, without Ezekiel there would have been no Priestly Code. The prophet in him was inspired to see, in the darkest days of Israel's humiliation, when the flower of the nation was in captivity among the heathen, the vision of a restored people, a holy people in a holy land, serving its God perfectly, and endowed by him with a plenitude of spiritual blessing.

It was, however, the priest in Ezekiel that gave determinate shape to the vision, building up a new Temple to be both the physical and spiritual centre of the land, appointing for it an ordered hierarchy of ministers, and prescribing their duties and their revenues, ordaining the sacrifices and the festivals. But through the uninviting mass of details—uninviting at least as it appears to us—one great thought sheds its light : the name of the city shall be : *Yahwe is there.*[1] So all the regulations are intended to secure the conditions in which it shall be possible for the holy God to dwell among his people. The people will, indeed, be in possession of the spirit,[2] but the spirit must express itself in outward forms and the expression be correct in all its details.

We see already exemplified in Ezekiel some of the difficulties which arise in religion based on positive law. *Littera scripta manet*, but religious experience and moral standards change, and the problem emerges of reconciling the written precept, regarded as the expression of the will of the perfect and unchanging God, with the progressive conscience of the people to whom it was once given.

Thus the statement attributed to Yahwe by Ezekiel : " I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgements wherein they should not live," [3] is intended to account for the presence in the earlier legislation of commands to which objection was taken in the prophet's own time.[4] The modern idea of progressive revelation and of the principle of accommodation were unknown to him, and,

[1] Ezek. xlviii. 35.
[2] Ezek. xxxix. 29.
[3] Ezek. xx. 25 f.
[4] Exod. xiii. 12. The sacrifice of the firstborn to Yahwe.

therefore, in accordance with his own conception of the divine absoluteness, he is compelled to conclude that these commands were given in punishment to a rebellious people.

Later on a similar problem emerged in connexion with Ezekiel himself. Apparently contradictions were seen between the regulations laid down by him and those of the Priestly Code, and it is related that a certain Rabbi burnt the "midnight oil" to the extent of three hundred barrels in his studies to reconcile the book of *Ezekiel* with the precepts of the Tora.[1] We can admire the dialectic subtlety of the Rabbis, and can understand their aim, but we feel that we are removed by them far from the spirit of the prophets and the mind of Jesus.

Closely related to Ezekiel is the so-called Holiness Code of *Leviticus*, chaps. xvii–xxvi. This code (H) is in many respects similar to P, but its language is different, and its leading ideas are not equally prominent in P. These are the thought of the divine holiness and the consequent requirement of holiness in the people;[2] the reiterated declaration: "I am Yahwe;[3] the idea of the land itself being polluted by sin;[4] and the stress on social morality.[5] There are also certain similarities with *Deuteronomy*, e.g. the law of the central sanctuary, the insistence on social duties, and the promises and warnings of chap. xxvi. But the resemblance to Ezekiel is closer. H represents, indeed, a more advanced stage of ritual than Ezekiel, but there are in both the same conception of holiness, the same reiteration of the phrase, "I am Yahwe," and the same attitude to social morality. The Holiness Code is to be dated, therefore, between D and P, and belongs to the time of Ezekiel. Its authorship cannot be attributed to Ezekiel himself, for it is evidently a compilation; but it betrays his influence.

Driver writes: "Ezekiel, the priestly prophet, has affinities with P, but his affinities with H are peculiarly striking and numerous: the laws comprised in H are frequently quoted by

[1] *b. Shabb.* 13*b*. Cf. Herford: *Pharisaism*, p. 134.
[2] xxi. 8, xxii. 32 f. *al.*
[3] xviii. 5 *al.*
[4] xviii. 25, 27.
[5] Chaps. xviii–xx.

him, and the parenetic passages contain many expressions—sometimes remarkable ones—which otherwise occur in *Ezekiel* alone." [1]

In Ezekiel and H alike the conception of holiness retains a semi-physical character. In primitive thought what is holy possesses a quality which demands caution and restriction in its use (if an object), in approach to it (if a place), or in intercourse with it (if a person). This quality is infectious and dangerous.[2]

As religion passes out of the animistic stage, these restrictions are regarded as rules imposed by God for his own inscrutable purposes. No other reason is sought for them, and they have force and value solely as expressions of the divine will.[3] The observance of them is the service of God, wherein his people are to delight.

In Ezekiel and in H holiness is inseparable from Yahwe, who is the fount of holiness. Hence all that is brought into touch with him is *holy*, whether persons or places or things, and the laws in both codes are instructions how to act in face of this holiness.[4]

The prophets had retained, but had also transfigured, this conception of divine holiness, in that they asserted the same need of reverence in the approach to God and of fitness in his worshippers, while they insisted that the only distinctions which were of value in his sight were moral, not physical, ones, and that the service of God consisted in the performance of social duties.

In Ezekiel and H we find a combination of the primitive (ultimately animistic) theory and the teaching of the prophets. Justice, honesty, kindliness are included in what is required by Yahwe's holiness, together with regulations touching holy things and places and persons, in which holiness is still regarded as a physical quality inherent in them, to be guarded by taboo-like restrictions.[5] The effect, accordingly, of the combination of the primitive with the newer ways of thought is to retain in the idea

[1] *L.O.T.*, p. 45.
[2] Cf. Ezek. xlvi. 20. Cf. Lofthouse, in Peake's *Commentary*, p. 196.
[3] Lev. xxvi. 46, xxvii. 34; Num. xxxvi. 13.
[4] Cf. e.g. Lev. xxii. 1–3; Ezek. xliv. 13, xlv. 1.
[5] Cf. Lev. xxii; Ezek. xl–xlviii.

of God, as we discern it in Ezekiel and H, an element which is not completely rational nor completely moral.

The attempt to regulate the religious and social life of the community by an authoritative code of law was not made for the first time by Ezekiel and his contemporaries. An earlier attempt had been made by the promulgation of *Deuteronomy*, or the kernel of it, during the reformation under king Josiah. Even before this, indeed, legal codes had existed, viz. the Decalogues of J and E and the Covenant Code; but it was not until the year 621 B.C., when king and people "made a covenant before Yahwe, to walk after Yahwe, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book,"[1] that there was any comprehensive code claiming full authority over the whole life of the community, in civil and religious affairs alike.

It is to *Deuteronomy*, therefore, that we must assign the beginning of legalism, i.e. of a religion mediated by a system of law. Yet it would be a mistake to exaggerate the legal aspect of religion as set forth by *Deuteronomy*. After all, the book is the outcome of the prophetic movement of the eighth century, and its ideals are essentially the same. The code of law is set in a framework of discourse, which reminds us of the exhortations of the prophets, and it is itself interspersed with appeals to motive which are theoretically irrelevant in legalism. At the outset, almost, stands the claim that the whole moral and spiritual energy of Israel must be devoted to its great Deliverer. "Thou shalt love Yahwe thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."[2] Here is a principle, the very essence of prophecy, which bursts all bounds of law.

The subsequent importance of the law of the single sanctuary leads us, perhaps, to lay undue stress on the legal as distinct from the prophetic aspect of *Deuteronomy*. Yet, when this admission has been made, it must be affirmed that the book is a compromise between the prophetic spirit and the existing order. It inaugurated a

[1] 2 Kings xxiii. 3. [2] Deut. vi. 5.

great reform, but that reform was not entirely radical. It has been said that " the purpose of the earlier historical works was to glorify the existing order of things, of *Deuteronomy* to condemn and displace that order." [1] The statement goes too far, for although *Deuteronomy* denounces and legally abolishes the high places, it retains the sacrificial cultus, albeit in a restricted form, and with it those conceptions of the nature and character of God which were inseparable from it. We can hardly imagine Jeremiah making terms with the cultus; but this is what *Deuteronomy* did. The prophetically minded author, or authors, were as fully opposed to the existing cultus, with its large admixture of heathenism, as was Jeremiah himself, and held as firmly to the prophetic idea of God as requiring righteousness and social justice from his worshippers rather than a multitude of sacrifices and offerings.

But the Deuteronomist had a constructive aim, and sought to make the prophetic ideal an effective power in national life. For this there was needed something more than the intermittent preaching of individual men, however lofty their doctrine. There must be a discipline which would exercise a steady pressure on the nation, in whole and in part. The ideal must no longer remain abstract, but become embodied in a concrete form, a rule of life and worship. A rule of worship implies a ritual, and it was felt, perhaps, that the existing cultus, if drastically reformed, might be made an expression of the ideal.

So we may imagine the Deuteronomist to have argued. The sacrificial cultus was deeply rooted in popular custom, and closely bound up with the vested interests of the priesthood. To reject it root and branch might well seem to be the taking of the line of greatest resistance and the throwing away of the hope of practicable reforms. The more reasonable course would appear to be to purge away those features of the cultus which were known to be of heathenish origin, and to keep the purified residue under strict observation, lest the evils should return.

[1] G. B. Gray in *E.Bi.*, article " Law Literature," col. 2736.

Above all, the Deuteronomist aimed at ending the practical polytheism of the nation by restricting sacrifice to Jerusalem. The one altar would be a visible witness to the one God. So the command goes forth: "Cast away every Canaanite and Assyrian abomination, destroy every image and *'ashera* and *maṣṣeba*, offer no sacrifice save at the place of Yahwe's choice."

It may well be that the Deuteronomist was justified in the course he took; that it was in fact the only one open to him, if he was to secure the acceptance of his ideal by the nation at large; and it is, perhaps, idle to speculate upon the probable results, had he attempted to accomplish his aim by other methods. What we actually see in *Deuteronomy* is a compromise between the priests and the prophets, an eloquent and effective presentation of the prophetic idea of God, together with the recognition of the sacrificial cultus.

The Deuteronomic reform, backed by the executive power of the king, won a superficial success, but the defeat and death of Josiah were the signal for a return of the old state of things. Soon the dissolution of the state followed, and the religious centre of Israel was transferred to Babylon. But although the Deuteronomic Code was in effective operation for a few years at most, its influence by no means ceased. During the Exile a school of writers reconstructed the history of Israel's past from the view-point of the book, meting out judgement to the kings by the standard of the code. *Deuteronomy* also provided the precedent for the fresh attempts that were made by Ezekiel and the authors of the Holiness Code to prescribe a way of life and worship which should perfectly satisfy the requirements of Yahwe. We are justified, therefore, in making *Deuteronomy* introduce the first stage of legalism, and from this we pass on through Ezekiel and H to the fully developed system enforced by Ezra and Nehemiah. The law book of Ezra is most probably what we now know as the Priestly Code.

Ezra's Laws, like those of *Deuteronomy* two centuries before, were imposed by the civil as well as the religious

power,[1] but this time success was permanent. Political conditions, no doubt, favoured the result. It is doubtful whether a kingdom could have long continued to be governed by the code of *Deuteronomy*, but the Jewish community in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra enjoyed no independent national life. Its political destiny was determined by the great empire to which it belonged; but within the narrow limits of the province it was free to build up a church life upon lines of its own, and these were the lines of the Priestly Code. Thus Israel became the people of a book, and henceforth the *Tora* was the dominating power in its life. Legalism triumphed and held its own through all the vicissitudes of the next four centuries, till it issued in the Pharisaism which we know in New Testament times. There were other movements in Judaism, but Pharisaism represents the main line of development,[2] and when Jesus revived the manner and doctrines of the great prophets there was inevitably a conflict between him and the accredited teachers of the nation.

SUMMARY.

Legalism depends upon the possession of authoritative Scriptures. In the post-Exilic community the Law held the supreme place, and the prophet made way for the scribe. The Law is formulated in the Priestly Code, but it was Ezekiel who first sketched the plan of a theocratic community, a "holy" people, whose whole life should be regulated by a divine Law. Closely related to Ezekiel is the Holiness Code (*Leviticus* xvii–xxvi). Both *Ezekiel* and H retain the primitive, quasi-physical conception of holiness, and combine ethical with ritual precepts. An earlier attempt to regulate the religious and social life of the community by a code of law had been made in *Deuteronomy*, which must be regarded as the starting-point of legalism. This book is a compromise, uniting the prophetic teaching concerning the moral and spiritual character of God with a restricted form of the sacrificial cultus. The Deuteronomic constitution continued in force for a few years only, but the influence of the book persisted, inspiring both historians and lawgivers. In changed political conditions Ezra and Nehemiah succeeded where the earlier reformers had failed, and Israel became the people of the Law.

[1] Cf. Neh. x.

[2] Cf. Herford: *Pharisaism*, p. 47; and Montefiore: *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 469.

## CHAPTER II

# LEGALISM AND THE MODIFICATION OF THE PROPHETIC IDEAS

THE INCONSISTENCIES OF LEGALISM. THE VALUE OF LEGALISM.

WE may now ask how, and in what respects, the compromise effected first by *Deuteronomy* between the teaching of the prophets and the traditional cultus modified the idea of God in the subsequent development of religion in the direction of legalism.

Stated briefly, the answer will be that in the first place legalism by the interposition of a written law between God and man tended to emphasize the divine transcendence; and secondly, that it brought back elements of the popular religion which the prophets had discarded or were on the way to discard. As Cornill says:[1] "The tendency of the legislation subsequently embodied in P was to encourage all that the earlier prophets had previously denounced; but this was the necessary price at which the complete abandonment of idolatry had to be purchased."

The elements of the popular religion incorporated in legalism were: the quasi-physical conception of divine holiness; the view of sin as the breach of positive law and of God as pre-eminently the Lawgiver, who claimed obedience equally in the moral and the ritual sphere; the theory of atonement by means of sacrifice at the Temple; the consequent localizing of the divine presence; and, above all, the stemming of the tendency towards universalism, and a return to nationalism and particularism.

[1] *Einleitung in das A.T.* (E.T.), p. 115. Cf. Marti: *Religion of the O.T.*, p. 231 (E.T.).

First, then: the idea of God becomes more and more transcendent, for although the Law as the revelation of his will enters intimately into the detail of life, yet it intervenes as an external mediator between God and man. It is not a law in the heart.

The tendency towards transcendentalism is manifest in the personification of the attributes of God, his spirit, his wisdom, his word; and again, in the increased interest in angels as his intermediaries in dealing with mankind. In *Ezekiel* and P no prominence is given to angels; in *Job* [1] they appear in the Prologue and are mentioned in the Poem; in *Daniel* [2] and in *Zechariah* [3] they have come to hold an important place. They appear in almost all the Apocryphal and Apocalyptic books, e.g. *Tobit*, the *Enoch* literature, *Jubilees*, 2 *Maccabees*, *Apocalypse of Baruch*, 4 *Esdras*,[4] and they are referred to as the agents of God, as his viceroys, as hearers of prayer, and as mediators between God and man.

Of course, all these works speak also of the direct action of God and of immediate communion between God and man; but in so far as attention is directed to intermediaries, it is just to speak of a tendency to remove God from humanity. The God who once tabernacled with Israel and walked with men is now succeeded by the God of heaven.[5] The once familiar name Yahwe is now no longer uttered. The view of God is deistic. It is not easy, indeed it is impossible, to accept the judgement of Israel Abrahams, that "from the Maccabæan period onwards God becomes ever nearer to Israel." [6]

Next, we have to consider the primitive elements retained in legalistic ideas. That holiness was conceived of as a quasi-physical quality is attested by all the literature of legalism, e.g. by *Leviticus* xi. 44 ff., xx. 22 f.; *Ezekiel* xliii. 7–9.[7] It is true that this conception does not entirely rule the mind of the legalists, for in *Leviticus* chap. xix

[1] Chaps. i. ii; xxxviii. 7. [2] viii. 16, ix. 21, x. 13, xii. 1.
[3] i. 9, 12, ii. 3, iv. 1, etc.
[4] Tobit iii. 17, v. 16, 21, xii. 12–15; Enoch ix. 2 f., xv. 2, lxxxii. 7; Jub. xii. 22, xiv. 20, xvi. 1; 2 Macc. iii. 24–34, v. 2–4; Apoc. Baruch vi. 2–viii. 2; 4 Esdras v. 31, vi. 1, etc. [5] Neh. i. 5, etc.
[6] *Jewish Encyclopædia*, article "Maccabees," p. 243. Cf. Montefiore: *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 429 ff. [7] Cf. Hag. ii. 11 f.

and elsewhere moral precepts are expressly included within the catalogue of duties owed to the holy God, and covered by the formula: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." [1] When, however, in the same context in which these moral precepts occur, we read that to eat of the flesh of the peace-offering on the third day after the sacrifice is an abomination, and that "every one that eateth it shall bear his iniquity, because he hath profaned the holy thing of Yahwe: and that soul shall be cut off from his people," [2] we feel that there is evidence of a confusion of thought which strongly militates against the complete spiritualization of the idea of God.[3]

The same confusion of thought is involved in the belief that animal sacrifice is acceptable to God. So long as God is regarded as One who might smell the sweet savour of the sacrifice, and be pleased therewith, a rational motive for the slaughter and burning of beasts at his altar is apparent; but the God of the Creation Story in P, at whose word all things come into being, the God whom heaven and earth cannot contain, may not be supposed to delight in physical gratification of this sort. There is a contradiction deeply grounded in legalism between the idea of a God who is spirit, which was inherited from the prophets, and the primitive idea of an anthropomorphic God, which is the only intelligible basis of the sacrificial system.

If it be argued that the legalists regarded the sacrifices as things indifferent in themselves, and arbitrarily commanded by God simply that in offering them Israel might prove its obedience to the divine will, then the spirituality of God is saved at the expense of the rationality of his service.[4] Theoretically, the legalist is impaled on one or other horn of a dilemma, and either his idea of God is not spiritual or it is not rational. In practice the worshipper probably incurred both dangers, his mind being influenced alike by the traditional idea of a tribal

[1] Lev. xix. 2. [2] Lev. xix. 8.

[3] Cf. Montefiore: *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 325.

[4] "The logical circle—that the atoning ceremonies were ordered by God to produce their effect upon himself—was necessarily unperceived by the priestly mind." Montefiore *op. cit.*, p. 337.

god physically akin to his people, and by the legalistic idea of a transcendent deity whose arbitrary will demands a service for which no reason is vouchsafed. Further, it is maintained by all the teachers of legalism that the sacrifices atoned for sin.[1] Here, again, the doctrine is intelligible enough so long as the idea of God is naïvely anthropomorphic. The offended deity is propitiated by receiving a gift at the hand of the sinner. But the prophets had taught that repentance is the condition of forgiveness, and the lesson had not passed unheeded. The legalists insist upon the necessity of the sinner's repentance. But they are assured also of the efficacy of the atoning sacrifice. Yet they have no ethical explanation to offer as to why sacrifices atone,[2] and the worshipper must have fallen back on the unspiritual conceptions of primitive religion, or else have rendered an unreasoning obedience to an arbitrary command. The result, again, is that the idea of God is neither completely spiritual nor completely rational.

Further, in the dead level of a written code ceremonial and moral precepts are equated. It is sin to oppress a neighbour or to rob him ; it is sin also to sow two kinds of seed in one field or to wear a garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together.[3] The man who was found gathering sticks on the sabbath was " stoned with stones, and he died ; as Yahwe commanded Moses." [4] When such an incident as this is recorded in the *Tora*, we cannot wonder at the inevitable conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees on the question of the Sabbath.

It was impossible to moralize the idea of God completely while the expression of his will was found in an heterogeneous mass of laws lacking unity of spirit. The scribes of our Lord's day seem to have become aware of this, for they were seeking amid the multiplicity of precepts "the first and great commandment." [5]

[1] Lev. xiv. 19, etc.

[2] Lev. xvii. 11, which asserts that the blood is the medium of atonement, is no exception to this statement. Cf. G. F. Moore in *E.Bi.*, article " Sacrifice." Also quotation from Montefiore above, and *op. cit.*, p. 522.

[3] Lev. xix. 13, 19.

[4] Num. xv. 36.

[5] Matt. xxii. 38.

The story of the death of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu,[1] serves to illustrate several of the points touched on in the last few paragraphs. The offence of the brethren was that they offered in their censers "strange fire before Yahwe, which he had not commanded them." Their offence, that is, was a purely ritual one, consisting in the approach to God otherwise than in the prescribed manner. They violated the "taboo" which guarded the divine holiness, whereupon "fire came forth from before Yahwe, and devoured them, and they died before Yahwe." This story shows clearly how the developed legalism of the Priestly Document had incorporated the crude notions of primitive religion, for it is closely parallel to the ancient stories of the men of Beth-Shemesh who were slain because they looked into the ark of Yahwe,[2] and of Uzzah whom God smote because "he put forth his hand to the ark of Yahwe, and took hold of it; for the oxen stumbled."[3] The Priestly Document has retained in the idea of God conceptions which are not spiritual, rational, nor ethical.[4]

A similar combination of incompatible ideas in legalism is to be discerned in the localizing of the presence of the transcendent God by making Jerusalem the only lawful place of sacrifice.[5] If sacrifices were pre-eminently the way of approach to God, and if they could be offered at Jerusalem alone, then there must have been a strong tendency to believe that God was in a special sense at home in the holy city. So again the Israelite is bidden to Jerusalem three times in the year in order that he may "appear before Yahwe."[6]

> Many scholars hold that the existing vocalization לֵרָאוֹת is not original; that it once was לִרְאוֹת, and that the true sense of the phrase is "to see Yahwe."[7]

Thus God seems to be limited to a particular place.

The tendency towards localizing the divine presence which followed from the restriction of animal sacrifice to a single sanctuary was, however, largely corrected

[1] Lev. x. 1–7. [2] 1 Sam. vi. 19 f. [3] 2 Sam. vi. 7.
[4] Cf. the story of the campaign against Midian (Num. xxxi. 1–24).
[5] Deut. xii. 5. [6] Deut. xvi. 16.
[7] Cf. Driver: *Deuteronomy*, p. 198.

by the establishment of innumerable synagogues not only in Palestine but throughout the regions of the Diaspora. In these the faithful Jew sought and found his God, and offered to him the spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

Nationalism and particularism remained always primary features of the religion of legalism, as its most candid exponents admit.[1] The Law, the *Tora*, in which was contained the perfect revelation of God, was the exclusive possession of Israel, and God was the God of Israel in a sense in which he could not be the God of all nations. If the nations were to profit by the *Tora*, it could only be in fellowship with Israel. Thus real universalism was made impossible. True, the Midrash affirms that God offered the *Tora* to all the nations of the world, and all refused it except Israel. But this was obviously not the historic fact, and its acceptance as fact would not have led to universalism. In reality the purpose of the legalists was to set up Israel as a closed corporation, distinct from the surrounding peoples.[2] In this they succeeded, and the measure of their success is seen in the bitterness of the conflict between the Pharisees and the apostle who declared that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile.

Herford well points out that the true ground of conflict between the Pharisees and Paul lay in the nationalism of the one and the universalism of the other,[3] whereas in the case of Jesus the opposition was between "two fundamentally different conceptions of religion, viz. that in which the supreme authority was *Tora*, and that in which the supreme authority was the immediate intuition of God in the individual soul and conscience. The Pharisees stood for the one; Jesus stood for the other."[4]

The tendency of Christian scholars is to judge legalism somewhat harshly, to emphasize its limitations and inconsistencies, to direct attention to its external forms and the danger that in them salvation might be sought

[1] Cf. Herford, *op. cit.*, pp. 221 f.; Montefiore: *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 437–439.
[2] Cf. Herford, *op. cit.*, 67 f.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 221.
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 167 f.

*ex opere operato*. It is well, therefore, that Jewish writers like Montefiore, Abelson, Abrahams, and Schechter, should urge that legalism might be, and often, if not always, was, the vehicle of a sincere and humble faith, of a devoted and joyous piety.

Budde exclaims : [1] "How high stands the religion of the pre-Exilic prophets above the post-Exilic religion!" Loisy aptly replies [2] that there never was any religion of the prophets. And in one sense he is right. Post-Exilic religion was the religion of a community, effectively regulating life and worship, and making its idea of God a common possession. The religion of the prophets, on the other hand, though it fully possessed their own souls, and was proclaimed by them with matchless fervour, did not win the nation.

We have no evidence of any general movement of reform resulting from the teaching of Amos and Hosea. Isaiah may have gathered a band of disciples,[3] and may have inspired an evanescent effort on the part of Hezekiah to purify the cultus, but its effects were quickly swept away by the reaction under Manasseh. Jeremiah is always a solitary witness for the truth, uttering an unheeded protest.

But the movement which began with *Deuteronomy*, and continued in Ezekiel and Ezra and the Scribes, gained both a hearing for its ideas and the acceptance of them by the bulk of the community. These ideas cannot claim the pure spirituality of those of the great prophets : there was in them, as we have seen, an admixture of ideas drawn from the lower levels of primitive culture.[4] Yet the ethical monotheism which was the highest product of the prophetic mind was retained, and was made an effective power in the life of the post-Exilic community. The religion of the pre-Exilic prophets might have been lost to the world, had it not been incorporated in the lowlier form of post-Exilic religion.

[1] *The Nomadic Ideal in the O.T.*, p. 18.
[2] *Religion of Israel*, p. 188. [3] Isa. viii. 16.
[4] "That mournful relic of outworn paganism—the conception of external holiness and pollution, of clean and unclean." Montefiore: *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 478.

The hard shell of law and institution preserved the kernel of prophetic thought through the many vicissitudes of national life between the days of Ezra and of Christ. Ideals must be expressed in outward form, if they are to survive in the actual conditions of this present world. In so taking outward form they seem to lose inevitably some of their original purity, and there is always the danger lest regard for the form may degenerate into formalism among the less spiritually minded adherents of a religion. Then comes the call of the new prophet to shatter the form, however venerable it may have grown, and to disengage the pure idea.

So Jesus and Paul shattered the hard shell of Jewish legalism to set free once more the prophetic idea of God. But the idea could not remain unclothed, and the religion of Jesus—Loisy says,[1] indeed, that there never was a religion of Jesus any more than a religion of the prophets—took fresh form in the laws and institutions of the Christian Church. Legalism soon became a danger in Christendom.

There are always some, however, in every age and in every religious society, who penetrate to the spirit within the form, and the Jewish Psalms prove that amid the increasing legalism of the post-Exilic community devout souls could still make a direct approach to the God of the prophets. Dean Inge has written beautifully: "Even when the provincialism of Jewish politics is the proximate inspirer of these meditations, the fire of pure devotion frequently bursts through, and turns 'Jerusalem' from a second-rate hill fortress into the ideal city of God, and 'Israel' into the symbolic name of elect humanity."[2] The Gospels are not favourable witnesses to the state of contemporary religion, and are often accused of anti-Pharisaic bias, but they show clearly enough that in the days of Jesus there were not a few within the fence of the Law who were prepared by the influence of the Psalmists and the Prophets to receive his revelation of the heavenly Father.

[1] *Loc. cit.*

[2] *The Parting of the Roads*, p. 7. Cf. Montefiore: *Hibbert Lectures*, Lect. IX.

SUMMARY.

Legalism retained the main features of the prophetic idea of God. "All that exalts the legal religion above the peasant religion is derived from the prophets." [1] But the idea became increasingly transcendent. "Under the sole dominion of the Law God was forced into the background and concealed from the eyes of the God-fearing and righteous man." [2] Legalism brought back ideas which prophetic religion had discarded, namely, the primitive conception of holiness, of atonement by sacrifice, of sin as a breach of positive law, whether ritual or moral. It tended to localize the divine presence, and to foster the growth of an exclusive spirit of nationalism. Legalism contained fundamental inconsistencies in its doctrine, and is neither completely rational nor completely ethical and spiritual. Yet its value must be acknowledged. Piety could, and did, exist within it, and the pure spirituality of the religion of the prophets might have been lost to the world, had it not been incorporated in the lowlier form of post-Exilic religion. The danger was that the letter might prevail over the spirit, and the form stifle the life of religion. It was one part of the work of Jesus to destroy the tyranny of the letter, and to set free the spirit from the prison of the form.

[1] Marti: *Religion of the O.T.*, p. 221.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 230.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER

# FINAL SUMMARY

## Evolution and Revelation.

We have now seen in the course of our study that there is no single line of evolution or development in the doctrine of God in Israel in the long period between Moses and Christ, and that there is more than one type of interpretation of the idea of God.

One line of evolution, along which progress seems to have stopped at an early date, is seen issuing in the superstitions of modern Syria and Palestine. Its course may be traced back to primitive Semitic naturalism and animism.

Another line, whose culminating point is in the doctrine of Jesus, has been traced through the prophets to its faint, far-away beginning in the mission of Moses and the covenant at Sinai.

Israel's teachers do not always follow consistently the latter, the higher line of evolution. As we pass from the earliest poetic fragments in the Old Testament to the J and E documents, and on to the prophets of the eighth century B.C., we watch a gradual discarding of the less worthy primitive beliefs and practices till we reach a pure spiritual and universal monotheism in the Deutero-Isaiah.

But with *Deuteronomy* legalism had begun its development, and in most of the subsequent literature we find deviations from the higher line of evolution due to the influence of the older animism and to national, ultimately tribal, conceptions of deity. The idea of God is confused by the co-existence in it of inconsistent elements. The result is the Pharisaism of New Testament times.

In the foregoing pages use has been made of the phrase "the evolution of the idea of God." It is not thereby implied that we have been watching a purely natural process, as though the idea unfolded itself in virtue of some inherent force. The terms used—evolution, development—are, of course, metaphorical, and ideas have, in fact, no existence apart from the activity of minds. The evolution of the idea of God is, therefore, the progressive discovery of the truth about God's nature and character by successive thinkers.

Yet this, again, is but one aspect of the whole fact. Discovery on the part of man does not exclude self-revelation on the part of God. Rather, the two are inseparable, and (to adapt a metaphor used elsewhere [1]) they are like the convex and concave sides of a curve. If, as theists, we believe that "the ultimate ground of things is a single supreme reality which is the source of everything other than itself," [2] then, as the human mind is grounded in God, so the discovery, in any measure, of truth and reality by man is, in the same measure, the revelation of truth and reality by God.

Hence, in so far as any religion contains truth, it is a revealed religion. And, therefore, we would not deny a real, though fragmentary, revelation of God in the primitive culture whose traces we found in animistic notions in the Old Testament. Animism is the attempt of untutored minds to rationalize their experience of life and the phenomena of nature. It was an inadequate theory, and an illusion, perhaps, but it was not utterly devoid of truth, if it found in nature a Power, or powers, akin to man.

The pioneers of religion in its animistic stage, if such pioneers there were, none can know; they are as much lost in the mists of the past as the authors of folk-lore. We must rather regard such truth as there is in animism and in primitive religion generally as God's revelation of himself to the common consciousness through nature and humanity.

[1] Jevons: *Philosophy: What Is It?* p. 50.
[2] A. E. Taylor in *E.R.E.*

In Israel, however, we discern beyond this a special self-revelation of God mediated through a succession of great personalities beginning with Moses and culminating in Jesus Christ.

Is this revelation unique? The answer is: Look to the culmination; and if there is to be seen, as this study has sought to show, an organic connexion between the idea of God in the teaching of Jesus and the doctrines of the prophets, then it will not be denied that in days past God chose Israel out of all the nations to receive in a unique degree the knowledge of himself.

"God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." [1]

[1] Heb. i. 1.

# INDEX

## I. SUBJECTS


*'ab*, 93
Abel, his sacrifice, 85
'Abiel, 93
'Abijah, 93
Abimelech, 49, 51
Abraham, 50 f.
Absalom, 51
Absalom's pillar, 67 f.
*'adon*, 93
Adonijah, 47, 50, 93
'Adonijah, 93
*'aḥ*, 93
*'aḥebh*, 189
'Aḥijah, 93
Alliances, condemned, 177
*'am*, 93
'Ammi'el, 93
Amos, 180–191
  his rejection of sacrifices, 182 ff.
  and Hosea, conditions of their time, 180 f.
*Amos*, additions to, 190
Ancestor worship, 64–76
Angel of Yahwe, 200 f.
Angels, 128
  as intercessors, 133
  not mentioned in P, 125
Animal worship, 58 ff.
Animism—
  described, 55 f.
  in *Ezekiel* and H, 238 f.
  revelation in, 253
Anthropomorphism, 26, 33, 127, 151 f., 175, 188 f., 198 ff., 246
  avoided by P, 125
Apocalyptic—
  idea of God in, 140 ff.
  popularity of, 140
  Writings, 139–143
*'Ashera*, 54, 167
Assyrian influence, 80 ff.
Astral worship, 78–82
Atonement, 246
Augurs' oak, 49
Authority, divine, 29 ff., 189

*ba'al*, 93
Ba'aliah, 93
*Ba'alim*, 61, 98
Ba'alism, Phœnician, 209–211
Ba'al worship, 46 f., 98 f.
  immorality in, 89
Babylonia, influence of, 80 ff., 196
*Bamah*, meaning of, 45
Beelzebub, 108
Beer-lahai-roi, 51
Beersheba, 46, 49 ff.
  meaning of name, 51
*Bene elohim*, 128
*Berith*, 206
Beth-el, 46 f., 52 f.
Bethesda, 51
Beth-shemesh, 79
Blood ritual, 27 f.
Bull-worship denounced, 205
Burial—
  in the house, 69
  of dead, 67
Burnings for the kings, 69
Burnt-offering, 88

Cain, his sacrifice, 85
Chemosh, 195
Clean animals, 62 f.
Conversion, 153
Covenant, 206 f., 219
  an ethical relation, 225 f.
  New, 158
Creation, 124 f., 174 f.
  Tablets, 108

Dan, a sun god, 80
Deborah, palm tree of, 49
Decalogue, 194 f., 225

Degeneration in religion, 53
Deutero-Isaiah and Jesus compared, 114–116
*Deuteronomy*, 165–170
  a compromise, 239 ff.
  constructive aim of, 240 f.
  ethics of, 167 f.
  influence of, 241
  the beginning of legalism in, 239
Dodona, oaks at, 49
Dragon's Well, 50
Dualism, 140

E document, 193–208
E, ethical conceptions of, 203 f.
Eben-ezer, 47
*Ecclesiastes*—
  doctrine of God in, 134
  Grundschrift of, 133
  pessimism of, 133
*Ecclesiasticus*, 135
'Eli'ab, 93
'Eli'am, 93
Elijah, 210–213
'Elimelek, 93
Elisha, 212
*'Elohim*, applied to the dead, 73 f.
El-Shaddai, 218, 223
En-mishpat, 50
*Enoch*, 142 f.
En-rogel, 47, 50
Eschatology, 140
Essenes, 21, 38 f.
Evolution, 227
  and revelation, 253
  arrested, 19, 43
  of ideas, 19
Ezekiel, 148–155
  anthropomorphism of, 151 f.
  ethics of, 153
  pioneer of legalism, 234 ff.
  priest and prophet, 148 f., 152

Face of Yahwe, 201
Fatherhood—
  of God, 29–34, 129, 135, 142 ff., 164 f., 177, 189 f.
  physical, 26
Foundation-sacrifice, 88
Fountains, sacred, 24 f.
Full moon festival, 79
Funeral feasts, 72

Galeed, 46
*Ger*, 219
Gesenius-Kautzsch, 173, 183
Gift Theory of sacrifice, 84
Gilgal, 47
Gilgamesh, 80
Glory of Yahwe, 201
" God of Hosts," 186 f., 197
*Go'el*, 110
Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, 161.
Groves, 54
Guilt-offering, 89

Habiri, 221
Habit, power of, 160
Haggai, 121 f.
He-goat, 60 f.
Henotheism, 129, 194 f.
*heṣedh*, 189 f.
Hi'el, 93
High places, 45 f.
Holiness, 173 f.
  as a moral quality, 150
  as a physical quality, 149 f.
  Code, 237 f.
  meaning of, 149, 238, 244
*Hosea*, 180–191
  additions to, 190
Hosea—
  denounces bull-worship, 183 f.
    images, 184
  his view of idolatry, 183
  rejection of sacrifices by, 183 ff.

Idea of God in P, 124
Idealism and formalism, 250
Idolatry—
  denounced by Ezekiel, 154
  ridiculed in 2 *Isaiah*, 109
    in Psalter, 126
Immanence of God, 35
Individual responsibility, 153
Individualism, 159 f., 205
Inwardness, 157 ff.
Isaac, 51
*Isaiah*, 172–179
Isaiah—
  as statesman, 177 f.
  attitude to cultus, 178 f.
  theology of, 172, 176
Ishtar, 81

J document, 193–208
J, ethical conceptions of, 203 f.
J and E—
  compared, 198 ff.
  continued in *Judges* and 1 *Samuel*, 194
  their attitude to cultus, 205
Jacob, 47, 49, 51 ff., 69
Jephthah, 101, 195
*Jeremiah*, additions to, 155
Jeremiah, 155–165
  attitude to cultus, 160 ff.
    to Deuteronomy, 161 ff.
    to sacrifices, 161
    to Temple, 162

Jeremiah, universalism of, 162 f.
Jerusalem, effect of its fall, 17
Jesus—
  and the Law, 33
  teaching of, 29–34
Jethro, 219
Jezebel, 209 f.
*Jinn*, 24, 26, 60
*Job*—
  doctrine of God in, 131
  Prologue, 132 f.
Job's faith, 132
*Joel*, 121
Joseph, 69, 71
Josephus, 21
Joshua, 69
Josiah, reformation of, 44
*Jubilees*, 142
Judah, a mixed tribe, 221
Judas the Maccabee, 44
Justice of God, 131 f.

Kaddish, 67
Kadesh-barnea, 50
Kenite Hypothesis, 217–224
König, his views discussed, 53

Law—
  and morality, 36 f.
  exaltation of, 234 f.
Leah, origin of tribal name, 63
Legalism—
  content of, 233–242
  dependent on Scripture, 234
  development of, 233–242
  ethics of, 246
  Idea of God in, 233
  inconsistencies of, 243–248
  practices of, 36
  primitive elements in, 243 ff.
  sacrifices under, 245 f.
  unspiritual or irrational, 245 f.
  value of, 248–250
" Legitimate religion," 66, 83
Levirate marriage, 68
Likeness of God, 126
*Lilith*, 60
Localizing of God, 247
Love of God, 136, 142, 177, 189

Malachi, 119 f.
Mamre, oaks of, 49
Manasseh, his astral worship, 80 ff.
*Maṣṣeboth*, 51 ff., 68, 167
Meal, sacred, 85 f.
*Melek*, 93 f.
—*Yahwe*, 200
Melkarth, 93, 210
Meribah, 50
Messiah, 20
Messianic prophecies, 176
*Micah*, 179 f.
*Minḥa*, 84 f.
Minor Judges, 69
Miracles at tombs, 70
*Mishpaṭ*, 113
Miṣraim, 218
Mizpeh, a place of prayer, 44
Molech, 93
*Molek*, 201
Monolatry, 194, 211 f.
Monotheism, 166 f.
  in 2 *Isaiah*, 106 ff.
  in J, 196
  primitive, 97
  virtual, 156 f., 186 ff.
Morality—
  and religion, 182
  identified with custom, 100
Moreh, 50
Moses, a historic person, 217 f.
Mourning customs, 71
*Mukam*, 25
Muṣri, 218
Mythology, 127, 131, 151, 196
  Babylonian, 124

Naaman, 195
Nadab and Abihu, 247
Name of Yahwe, 201 f.
Names—
  animal, 94
  indicating kinship, 93
    lordship, 93
  natural poetry of, 94
  totem, 94
Nationalism, 37, 101, 112, 127, 138, 142, 151, 167, 176, 204, 248
Naturalism, 207
Nazirites, 213 ff.
Necromancy, 72–74
Nehemiah, 50
New moon festival, 79
Nomadic life preferred by J, 213
  religion, 211
North Arabian Theory, 218

Oak of weeping, 49
*'Ob*, 72–74
*'ola*, 87
Ophrah, 45

Pantheism, 135
Particularism, 101, 112, 248
Patriarchal legends, 218, 220
Peace-offering, 87
" People of the land," 22 f.
*Peṣel*, 205
Pharisees, 22
Polydæmonism, 98

Polytheism, not found in Israel, 97 f.
Priestly Document (P), 123–126
Primitive ideas, summary of, 28
Prophecy, character after Exile, 117 f.
Propitiation, Jesus' teaching on, 31
*Proverbs*, morality of, 134 f.
Psalms, moral character of God in, 129
Psalter, 126–130
  date of, 126
  divine Fatherhood in, 129

Queen of Heaven, 81, 97

Rachel, origin of tribal name, 63
Rachel's Grave, 68
Rechabites, 213 ff.
Red heifer, sacrifice of, 70
*Rephaim*, 75
Retribution, 131 f., 136, 168 ff.
Revelation—
  divine, 227
  in personality, 254
  progressive, 199, 236 f.
  the Mosaic, 225
Rimmon, 195

Sabbath, 79
Sacrifice—
  a communion feast, 85–88
  animistic origin of, 84
  as a tribute, 86
  as atoning, 89
  blood offered to deity, 86
  human, 88
  material of, 85
  method of, 83–91
  of firstborn, 88, 154
  religious value of, 90
  Table Bond Theory of, 86
Sacrifices under Legalism, 245
  repudiated in Psalter, 130
Sadducees, 21, 38
Saint worship, 65 f.
*Sa'ir*, 60 f.
Samson, 79 f.
  a Nazirite, 215
Samuel, 86 f.
  a Nazirite ?, 215
Satan, 122 f., 133, 203
Saul, 86
Semitic deities, 223
Serpent—
  as god, 61
  brazen, 61
Serpent's Stone, 50
Servant—
  of Yahwe, 113
Servant Songs, 112–114
Shear-jashub, 177
Shechem, 46 f., 49
*Shelem*, 87
*Shema*, 165
Shiloh, temple at, 45
Shrines, 23, 25, 44
*Sibylline Oracles*, 142 f.
Simeon, origin of tribal name, 63
Sin—
  and misfortune, 26 f.
  -offering, 89
  the moon-god, 78
Sinai, 78
  *maṣṣeboth* at, 52
  the home of Yahwe, 222
Solar myths, 80
Solidarity of family and nation, 204
Solity defined, 109
Son of man, 150
Spirit of God, 139
Spiritualism, 76
Stones, sacred, 24 f., 47 f.
Summary of development, 227–229
Sun worship, 27
Symbolism, 56
Synagogues, influence of, 248
Syncretism, 98, 198, 210, 213

Taboo, 247
Tell-el-Amarna Tablets, 221
*Teraphim*, 74 f.
*Testaments*, 141 ff.
Thankoffering, 87
*Tora*, 113
  meaning of word, 158 f.
Totemism, 58, 63 f.
  in Israel, 95
Transcendence, divine, 35, 138 f., 141 f., 187, 243 f.
Trees, sacred, 24 f., 48–50
Trito-Isaiah, 45, 59, 118 ff.

Unclean animals, 59, 62 f.
Under-gods, 128
Universalism, 112–114, 127, 133, 143, 157, 162 f., 167, 176, 204
Uzzah, 247

Volksreligion, 66

Waters, sacred, 50 f.
*Weli*, 23 f., 26
Wells, sacred, 24 f.
*Wisdom*, 136
Wisdom—
  defined, 136 f.
  Literature, 131–139
    date of, 131
  of God, 136 ff.

Wisdom personified, 137–139
Word of God, 139
Worship—
of stars, 79
of sun and moon, 79

Yahwe—
a jealous God, 211
a righteous God, 211 f.
acts for his name's sake, 111
an Amorite god, 221
as a moral Being, 100
as a proper name, 97
as God of the land, 197
as Redeemer, 110
as War-God, 197
called Ba'al, 198, 200
contrasted with other deities, 223
etymology of name, 222 f.
fatherhood of, 119
glory of, 118
God of a confederacy, 224
his choice of Israel, 205 f., 224
his eternity, 108
his omnipotence, 108 f., 127
his solity, 109
his tenderness, 110
Yahwe—*continued*
holiness of, 109 f., 173 f.
Israel's War-God, 101
localized in Canaan, 195
meaning of name, 199
moral character of, 167 f., 181 f., 202 f.
not tribal god of Israel, 224
providence of, 197
self-assertion of, 152
solity of, 174
Spirit of, 121 f.
spirituality of, 167, 175
transcendence of, 122, 174
tribal god of Kenites, 219
universal sovereignty of, 187 f., 195 f.
Yearly sacrifices—
of David's family, 71
of Elkanah, 71
Yo'ab, 93
Yo'aḥ, 93

Zealots, 21, 39
*Zebaḥ*, 87
Zechariah, 120 ff.
Zoheleth, 47

## II. AUTHORS QUOTED OR REFERRED TO

Abelson, 141, 249
Abrahams, 249
Addis, 153, 217
Andrews, 140
Anson, 31

Baldersperger, 26
Barton, 223
Bliss, 22, 25, 65
Box and Oesterley, 234
Budde, 65, 81, 164, 194, 198, 220, 223 f., 226 f., 249
Burney, 54, 74, 80, 88, 193 f., 215, 221
Butler, 169

Charles, 65, 142, 145, 234
Cheyne, 126, 134, 137, 158, 218
Conder, 25
Cooke, 215
Cornill, 30, 157 f., 164, 194, 226, 243
Curtiss, 22 ff., 25 ff., 65, 80, 85, 89

Davidson, 121, 149, 195, 199
Delitzsch, 150
Doughty, 25, 27, 78
Driver, 20, 123, 220, 237 f., 247
Duhm, 149, 164, 173

Epiphanius, 61

Fairweather, 140 ff.
Foakes-Jackson, 235
Frazer, 55

Galloway, 235
Gesenius-Kautzsch, 173, 183
Giesebrecht, 157, 164, 202
Gore, 35, 106
Gray, 93 ff., 172, 176
Gregg, 138
Gunkel, 16, 82, 97, 106 f., 113, 196

Harford, 199
Harper, 79, 180, 183, 185, 189 f., 193, 196, 204, 207 f.
Herford, 36, 237, 242, 248
Horton, 121

Inge, 250

Jaussen, 22, 25, 69
Jevons, 19, 84, 86, 253
Johns, 16
Josephus, 38

Kautzsch, 65, 73, 112, 118, 124, 126, 128 f., 151, 154, 160 f., 186 f., 193, 197 ff., 225
Kennett, 75, 161
Kompert, 67
König, 53, 66, 71, 86, 151, 155, 159, 220
Kuenen, 136

Lagrange, 26 ff., 97, 194
Lods, 65–74
Lofthouse, 150, 238
Loisy, 65, 100, 105, 151, 169, 178, 218, 249 f.

McFadyen, 113
McNeile, 199
Marti, 65, 70, 105, 132 ff., 158, 185, 196, 207, 243, 251
Moffatt, 33
Montefiore, 35, 37, 242, 244 ff., 248 ff.
Moore, 78, 194, 246
Movers, 158
Mowinckel, 113

Nairne, 176
Nicklin, 201
Nöldeke, 61
Nowack, 54, 71, 121

Oesterley, 234
Orelli, 156

Pater, 89 f.
Paterson, 86
Peake, 113, 158, 164
*Pirqe Aboth*, 234
Pringle-Pattison, 35

R. Jehudah, 29
Rashdall, 31
Robertson Smith, 22, 26, 28, 47, 56, 59 f., 85 f., 90, 93, 100 f. 110, 186, 219, 223
Robinson, 106, 149, 156

Sanday, 37
Schechter, 249
Schmidt, 156, 158
Schultz, 123
Siegfried, 133
Skinner, 124 ff.
Smend, 158
Smith, G. A., 121, 178, 186
Smith, H. P., 65, 72, 156, 166, 187, 196
Sozomenus, 49
Stade, 65, 81, 154, 158

Taylor, 253
Tertullian, 61
Thompson, 25
Tilby, 229
Tristram, 25
Tylor, 55, 84

Wellhausen, 22, 26, 28, 85, 149, 165, 223
Wernle, 19
Whitehouse, 107, 114
Wicks, 135, 141, 143
Wilson, 22, 25
Winckler, 218

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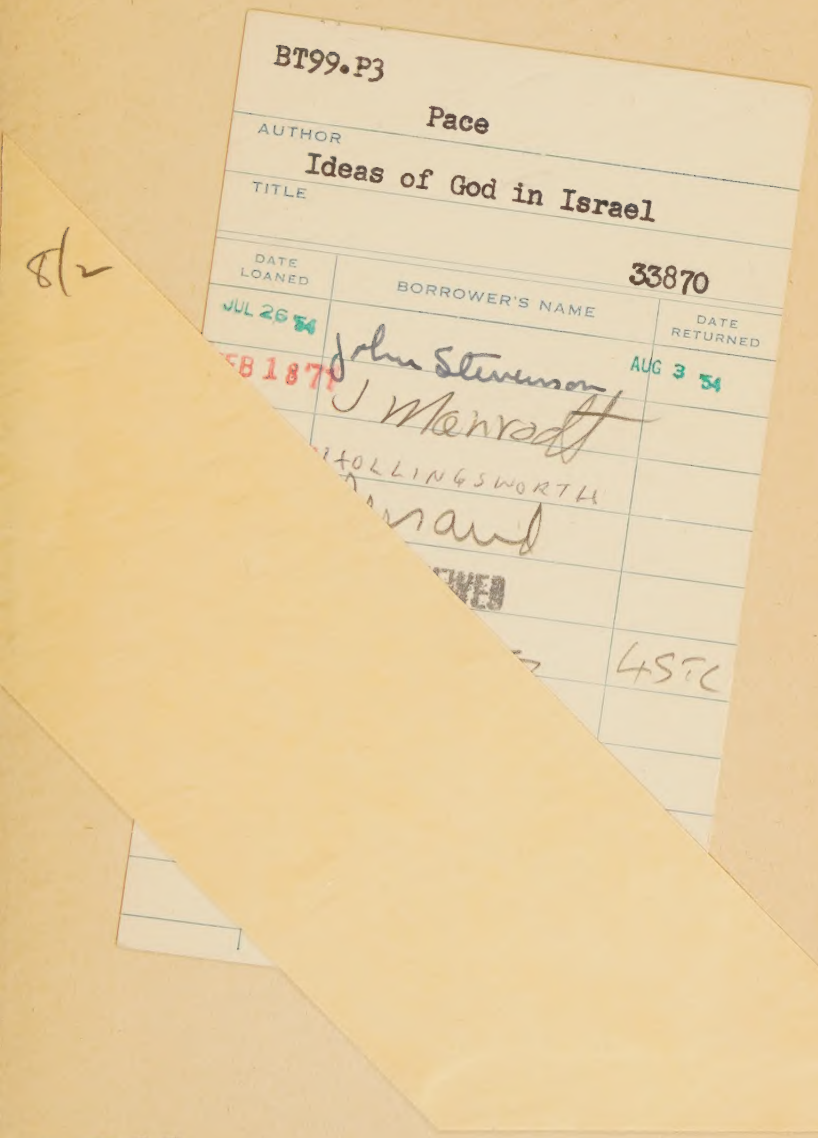

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